

My Leisure Hours.

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S. F. Emery.

My Leisure Hours.

A COLLECTION OF POEMS.

33
BY

Foster
SAMUEL F. EMERY,

CLASS OF '88, HAMILTON COLLEGE.

CLINTON:

S. F. EMERY.

1888.



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TO MY CLASSMATES,
WHOSE COMPANIONSHIP I HAVE ENJOYED THROUGH
FOUR YEARS OF COLLEGE LIFE,
THIS VOLUME
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.



PREFACE.

At the solicitation of many of my friends and classmates, I have undertaken the publication of this collection of poems, carefully selected from the entire number written by me during my college course. While most of them were intended only for my own pleasure and improvement, and many of them are a simple expression of the thoughts and feelings of my own life, I have tried to express only the pure and good and beautiful, rejecting all that is low and evil and coarse, as unworthy both of my better nature and of that form of language which I sought to use. If some of them have a strain of sadness, it is because they would be untrue to life without this.

In offering to the public these poems, which are truly the result of "My Leisure Hours," I hope that some, at least, may find in them the words of a sympathizing friend, helping to lead them to thoughts of the good, the beautiful and the true.

I take pleasure in acknowledging my indebtedness to many of my friends for valuable suggestions and much assistance in reading proof and in various other ways.

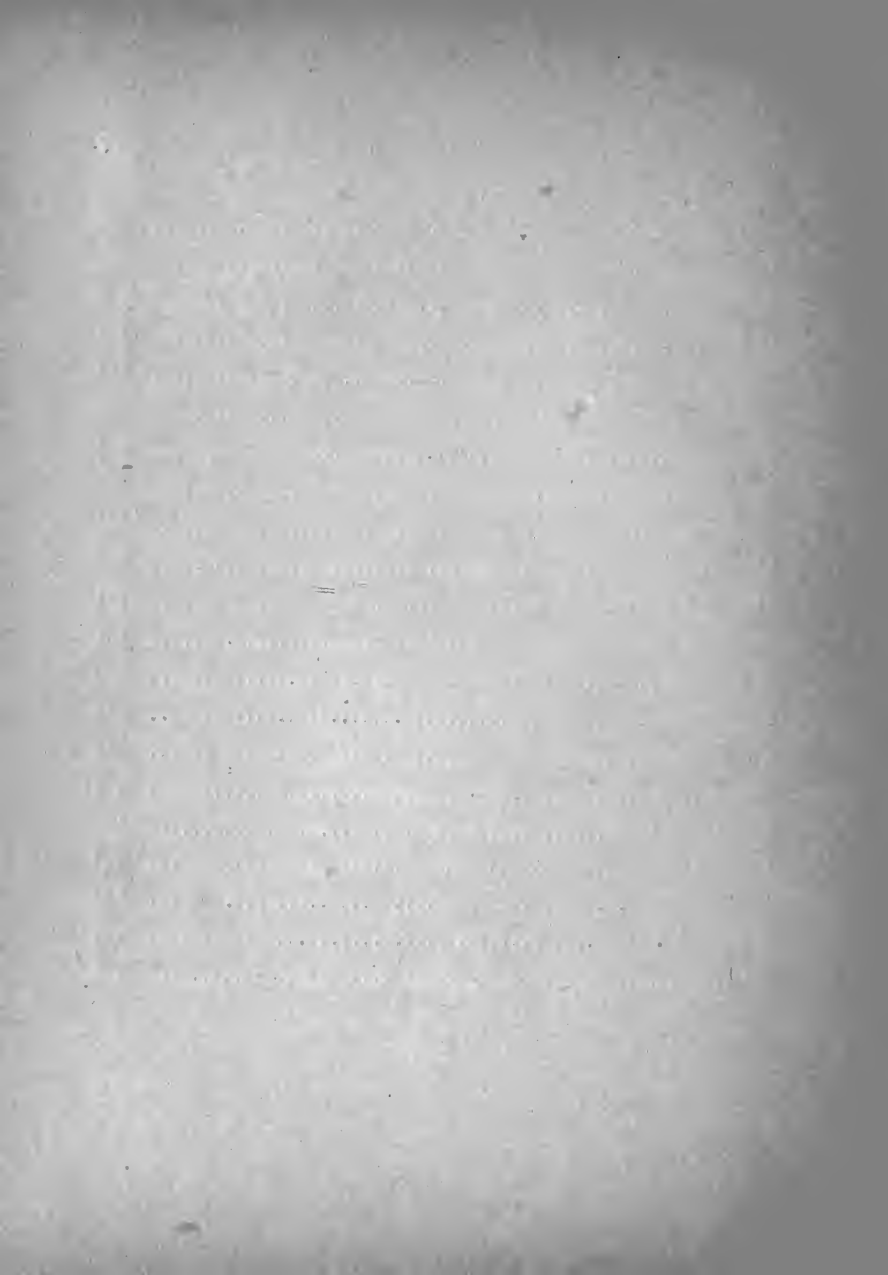
S. F. E.

*Hamilton College, Clinton, N. Y.,
May 15, 1888.*

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My Leisure Hours.

POETRY.

Not all true poetry is found
In sweet or smoothly flowing sound.
We see it smiling in the face
Of every bluebell in the vase.

It shines from every ray of light,
Filling the buds with beauty bright,
Giving to them that dainty hue
So often called "my own true blue."

We hear it purling in the brook,
Beside which in some quiet nook,
We love to sit on summer days,
And watch the cattle as they graze.

We see it twinkle in the eye
Of every school-boy passing by.
For in his life a poem lies,
Read only from the flashing eyes.

The little pebbles on the beach,
Tossed where the waves can scarcely reach,
Bear in their faces polished bright,
Poetic lines which none could write.

Behold it in the sunset sky,
Brightly adorned with gorgeous dye;
Or where the Sun God sinks to rest
Upon the water's peaceful breast.

It throbs in every beating heart
Pierced by the point of Cupid's dart;
It sobs in every mourner's cry,
And glistens in the tear-stained eye.

No man so mean, no life so low,
But feels sometimes the gentle flow
Of poetry in thought or deed,
And knows it fills an inward need.

These deeper, richer thoughts of life,
Calms in the storm of earthly strife,
Find true expression in the glow
Of words which move with metric flow.

MUSIC.

There is music in the raindrop
As it patters on the pane,
When the heart in meditation
Sympathizes with its strain.
When the mind is gently musing
O'er some pleasure that is past,
And again is living over
What the memory holds fast.

There is music in the zephyrs
As they whisper to the pine,
Telling secrets of the hilltop
Where the graceful southern vine,
Clinging to the arching branches
Of some youthful forest tree,
Shows its fairy flowers or clusters
'Mid the branches waving free.

There is music in the brooklet
As it dances through the dale,
Laughing at the rocks which meet it,
Smiling 'neath the fiercest gale,
Winking at the modest willow,
Which is shyly bending low

Just to kiss the sparkling waters,
As they gayly onward go.

There is music in the meadow
At the dawning of the morn,
When the dew is on the grasses,
When the golden day is born,
When the larks in joyous chorus
Chant their grateful praise aloud,
And the merry hymn is wafted
From the songsters to the cloud.

There is music for the lover,
Sweeter far than all the rest,
In the voice of her he worships
Though it strike into his breast
Darts, which shall not cease to rankle
Till the body pass away,
And the soul is free to wander
Through the realms of endless day.

BEAUTY.

There is beauty in the springtime,
When the earth is robed in green,
When the gentle, loving zephyrs
Kiss the violets serene.

There is beauty in the harvest,
When the heads of ripened grain
Bend beneath the western breezes,
As they sweep across the plain.

There is beauty in the winter,
When the trees are clothed in white,
When each twig is set with crystals
Glistening with colors bright.

There is beauty in the rain-drop,
As it trembles on the leaf;
Beauty in the smiles of pleasure;
Beauty in the tears of grief.

There is beauty for the lover
In the shy but wistful glance,
Flashing forth in true affection,
Striking deep its polished lance.

There is beauty, if you seek it,
Wheresoe'er you chance to be,
In the study or the parlor,
By the river or the sea.

HOME.

I'm lonely to-night, for I think of the home
From which in my fancy I once loved to roam;
The home where my mother so pure and so fair
Watched over her children with tenderest care.

I look from the window; the trees are as green
As any which ever at home I have seen;
The hills are all molded in beauty and grace,
And nature is showing her pleasantest face.

The lights in the village come out one by one
When shadows chase after the beams of the sun;
But no other light to my heart is the same
As that which of old from our own window came.

How often at night, as I came o'er the hill,
The heart in my bosom has almost stood still,
Till I caught through the tree-tops a glimpse of the light
Which shone from the window to gladden my sight.

The tear steals in silence its way o'er my cheek,
And thoughts come unnumbered, which no words can
 speak,
When I think of my home as a thing of the past,
And long for a home which forever shall last.

SUMMER AND WINTER.

All the birds were sweetly singing,
With their notes the woods were ringing,
And the plants to life were springing;
For the season was advancing,
And the sunbeams, gayly glancing,
Said that summer was at hand.

'Mid the bright enchanting flowers,
Where the climbing rose embowers,
And its petals gently showers,
Sat a maiden sweetly dreaming;
To her mind, the future seeming
Like a distant fairy-land.

All her being seemed in keeping
With the roses at her peeping,
With the buds which still were sleeping,
Undisturbed by any creature,
Unimpaired in any feature,
Ready for the gleaner's hand.

But she saw a passing stranger,
Not a rough and rugged granger,
Not an upstart from a manger,
But a man of noble bearing,

With an eye that told of daring,
And he seemed a being grand.

Oft the roses saw their meeting;
Oft the robins heard their greeting;
Heard their lips in joy repeating
Words of love, so fraught with pleasure,
That each accent seemed a treasure;
Yet the winter was at hand.

To his city life returning,
Though at first new objects spurning,
Love was still within him burning,
Soon to others, smiles were granted,
Soon new hopes the old supplanted,
Like the shifting grains of sand.

All the flowers had lost their gladness;
Chilling winds had brought them sadness;
Winter storms had dashed in madness
O'er her life so pure and tender,
O'er her form so fair and slender.
Was she wrecked upon the strand?

She could not, her love forgetting,
Banish sorrow, cease regretting,
But she did refrain from fretting.
In her heart she buried sorrow,
Watched a day, but on the morrow,
Turned to join life's earnest band.

IN THE DELL.

Down in a mossy dell
Where merry shadows dwell,
And dashing waters play,
Sat a girl with laughing eyes
Which were filled with mild surprise
As she saw amid the spray
Many fairies dressed in gray.

“Tell, fairies, tell to me,
What did the ages see,
Here where the shadows fall,
Long ago, before I came?
Did the hunter seek his game
’Neath the overhanging wall
Where the hollow echoes call?”

Then spoke the fairy queen,
“This have the ages seen
Here where the waters play;
Yonder on the mossy bank,
Where the brakes are thick and rank,
Sat a maid one pleasant day,
But her thoughts were far away.”

“Mused she upon the sky
Bright with its rosy dye?”
“No, on the distant trail,

And the brave who with his bow,
'Neath the bushes bending low,
Tracked the wild deer through the swale,
O'er the mountain, hill and dale.

“Then some one coming near
Sat down beside her here,
Said she should follow him
Through the forest to the home
Reared beneath the arching dome
Of the larches tall and grim,
Growing by the water's rim. . .

“Both rose without a word
Though love their bosoms stirred,
Yet it was never told.
Sweet the robin's evening song,
As the lovers passed along,
Timid one, the other bold,
Winding through the forest old.”

WINTER.

Merrily, merrily falleth the snow,
Coming from heaven to mortals below,
Down on the earth with its sorrow and woe;
 Here to be ruthlessly trampled beneath
Feet that are covered with filth from the street;
Some that are clumsy and some that are neat;
Some that are dirty and some that are sweet;
Covering deep, in the folds of its sheet,
 Village and city and mountain and heath,
Tenement houses all built in a row,
Mansions and churches erected for show,
Merrily, merrily falleth the snow.

Lazily, lazily coming to meet
Maidens and youths, that are waiting to greet
Winter, as coming with pleasures replete;
 Calling and dancing and riding about,
Sliding and skating, the jolliest spree,
Pleasure for taking and merriment free;
Nothing like winter the children agree;
Nothing like winter, like winter for me !
 Up with a cap as a signal to shout;
Winter is close upon summer's retreat;
Winter is monarch and summer is beat;
Up with his banner, his praises repeat.

Laughingly, heavily falling with glee,
Loading the branches of shrub and of tree,
Beauty of nature so wondrous to see,
 Crystallized whiteness o'er forest and field,
Flooding the eye with the glory of light,
Rich in profusion, unceasingly bright,
Tempteth the fancy to venture a flight
Over the hills, to the left or the right,
 Up to the fountains, which purity yield,
Drawing supplies from the mountain or lea,
Dashing the product on land or on sea,
Laughingly, heavily falling with glee.

Steadily, rapidly clouding the sight,
Filling the road with its barriers white,
Making the traveler shiver with fright,
 Falleth the snow on a wintery morn,
Forcing the children to quietly stay
In from the pleasure of frolic and play,
Gloomily wearing the winter away,
Watching the clouds of a threatening gray,
 Beating the little drum, blowing the horn,
Plaguing the dog till he gives them a bite,
Wishing the snow, so unpleasant and trite,
Steadily, rapidly melting from sight.

Drearily, drearily soundeth the lay
Chanted in March through the night and the day,
Though in the autumn 't was pleasing and gay.
 Weary our eyes of the sparkle and flash;

Weary of glistening, crystalline glare,
Sated with brightness and whiteness so fair;
Longing again for the kisses of air
Sweet with the perfume of apple and pear,
 Softened by shade from the maple or ash,
Whispering secrets—the treacherous fay.
Oh, for the smell of the meadow and hay!
Drearily, drearily soundeth the lay.

Wearily, haltingly, back to its lair,
Back to the region of walrus and bear,
There to await till again it shall dare,
 Forth on the summer, to spring from its den—
Beating retreat from the mountain and plain,
Trying to hold them, but trying in vain,
Going defiantly northward again,
Yielding unwillingly meadow and main,
 Back for the use and advantage of men—
Goeth the winter with sorrow and care;
Going with weeping, defeat for its share,
Wearily, haltingly, back to its lair.

THE WILLOW.

As the willow proud and stately,
Showing forth its grace and beauty,
Pleases all who look upon it,
But is never sought for merit,
So the man who gayly, lightly
Yields to friends as soon as duty,
Pleases them, but in the pleasing
Shows his weakness by thus yielding.

I.

TRIED AND FOUND WANTING.

In former times, I need not say just when,
There lived a man, I will not tell you where,
A strong and healthy farmer was he then;
No labor was too hard for him to bear.

His little farm was by no mortgage bound;
His wife was happy in their humble home.
Well pleased to help him till the fertile ground,
His boys were not as yet inclined to roam.

Each night they gathered round the cheerful fire,
And as they mused, their future seemed as bright
As the wild sparks chasing each other higher,
And quickly disappearing from their sight.

Just such a home had he as may be found
Scattered broadcast throughout our glorious land,
Where joy and heart-felt pleasures do abound
More than in mansion or in palace grand.

One day (although I do not like the style)
A neighbor calls desiring the good man
To speak with him in private for a while.
His business is to borrow if he can.

Not of the farmer, he has nought to lend,
But of some other in the farmer's name.
He means to pay, and asks it as a friend.
You know how beggars always press their claim.

The farmer hesitates; he does not like the plan.
He goes into the house to see his wife.
She warns, begs and entreats the best she can,
"Sign not, though for the best friend of your life."

He takes his hat, and goes forth to the town,
His friend meanwhile persuading on the way,
"Do you think me some worthless, slippery clown?
Fear not, I'm good, I'll pay when comes the day."

"I know that well, I doubt not you would pay:
I hesitate because through all my life
I've had a rule never to sign, and may
Not break it now, and then, you know, my wife."

“What does she know about such matters, now?
Women are always prompt to show their fears.
They never reason why or when or how.
You are too kind, she rules you with her tears.

“When time has straightened out her tangled thought
No doubt she will repent of what she said,
And think that you have done just as you ought;
A day or two will conquer all her dread.

“Meanwhile I cannot wait to cure her fright;
You know how I am fixed, come be a man,
Straighten your back for once and do the right;
Be kind and help a friend now while you can.”

His genial nature, sympathizing heart,
Cannot refuse. He is too kind indeed,
But not to her who of himself a part,
Shares with him every blessing, every need.

As the willow bending, swaying, lightly
Nodding to the brooklet, mildly dipping
In the waters, dallying, is slightly
Stronger than the water from its dripping;

As the reed so proudly standing upright
While the wind is sleeping, or the shower
Gently dropping, but beneath the first light
Zephyr swaying, shows its lack of power;

So he 'neath his friend's persuasion yielded,
Signed the fatal contract, signed with gladness,
Fearing nothing, as the pen he wielded,
For the future's crushing weight of sadness.

The wisdom of the saying somewhat old,
Be not thou surety for thy truest friend,
Hath time revealed to him. His homestead sold,
His hopes for life seem almost at an end.

But even yet a little hope remains;
A cottage and a garden, still his own,
Saved from the wreck of all his hard-earned gains,
Has fortune left to him, and this alone.

A pleasant home is this, and happy might
He be, spending the waning years of life,
Working each day and coming home at night,
Supporting thus with ease himself and wife.

II.

THE WAR.

O treason! what deed however bad
Would make thee blush?
What suppliant lonely and sad
Wouldst thou not crush?
What burning sin or passion mad
Didst thou e'er hush?

What that is base or low and shrinks from sight
But flourishes and prospers by thy might?
What that is good and kind and loves the light
But withers and decays in thy dark night?

The spring, the joyous spring is here at last,
The birds sing, and gay flowers come to light,
And beauty rare of every form and cast
Graces each hill and dale with colors bright.

The sun now scatters his life-giving rays,
The farmer turns the shining furrows up,
And sows his oats, or plants the yellow maize,
Scarce sparing time from work to dine or sup.

But lo! The clouds arise. Black, gloomy peaks
Mount swiftly to the sky. The thunder's roar
And lightning's flash bring pallor to the cheeks
Of man and maid. Now fasten tight the door.

The great drops fall, first here and there, then thick
And fast, a very torrent. Now 'tis still,
And then a sudden crash shakes every stick
And timber in the house, from roof to sill.

The storm is gone. The warm sun shines again,
The birds sing gayer for their morning bath,
The flowers are brighter for the early rain;
Peace rules, now that the storm has spent its wrath.

So in one early spring thick clouds arose
Threatening destruction to the land to send.
Deep peals of thunder and the noise of blows
Aroused the sleeping land from end to end.

And at the North men were not slow to show
The love which each one had for native land.
With solemn thoughts they marched to meet the foe.
Majestic was their tread, their motive grand.

Not every heart that held its country dear,
Could spill its blood to cover up the stain
Dark treason made, but many, though with fear,
Sent those they loved, and hoped when hope was vain.

Not every man could wildly rush to arms,
But some must do that which was harder still,
Stay in the workshops or upon the farms,
Watch quietly, and wait through good or ill.

All through the North the stars each night looked down,
And saw excited, restless groups of men
On corners in the village or the town,
Or in the stores or in the drinking den.

In such a group one night we find our friend
Waiting like all the rest to hear the news,
For his brave boys have gone to help defend
The land from rebels, who all rights abuse.

Standing upon a corner of the street,
He hears it said, they have the latest news
At the hotel. He goes and takes his seat,
And while he hears the list begins to muse.

“What if my boys should be among the dead?
’Twould kill their mother for she loves them so.”
The list is done, and shaking off his dread,
Seeing all’s well, he goes to let her know.

III.

YIELDING AGAIN.

The helpless craft, the vacant boat,
At mercy of the waves may float,
But let the pilot take command
He’ll guide it safely to the land.

But now a prowling wolf comes to his door.
It skulks among the bushes, as in dread.
Its hollow eyes are ever craving more.
Scarcely a leaf rustles beneath its tread.

Its eyes glare with increasing fire each day.
Its form grows thin. It dreads the light no more.
It stalks forth boldly crouching in the way,
A ghost, a skeleton, before his door.

Night after night he stands among the throng.
Often a friend asks him to take a drink.
At last he yields, (although he knows the wrong),
To please his friend. He fears what he might think.

At first (not to seem odd) he took a glass,
Then more. It raised his spirits, made him gay,
Helped to forget his trouble, and to pass
A social evening or a rainy day.

The night is still; with dizzy aching brain,
He takes his homeward way. He leaves the lights,
Descends a hill, and walks across the plain.
Trees reel and dance; he never saw such sights.

He climbs another hill. The silver moon
Shedding soft light shows him the lonely way.
He takes the shorter cut, trusting that soon
He will arrive at home; perhaps he may.

A winding footpath this and through woodlands.
He often used it, but to-night each tree
And shrub seems changed, and for a while he stands,
Trying some object which he knows, to see.

Failing of this he thinks that he will rest,
And sitting down beside a leaning ash,
Watches the moon, which there on high is dressed
In fleecy white and blue with yellow sash,

And bright gems flashing forth rare beauty lend.
He sees, but knows not what; things whirl around;
His sense grows dull; the earth and sky now blend
In one strange mass; he hears no farther sound.

The shadows cast their mystic beauty round.
The night-bird calls, "hu-hu" from distant pine.
The soft air stirs no leaf. No sin is found,
No shame these shadows hide, oh man but thine.

The night goes on, and o'er the eastern hill
The soft light of the coming morn
Steals through the air each living form to fill
With fresh delight. Thus is a new day born.

The man awakes and sees the bright blue sky
And graceful forms of branches overhead.
He wonders where he is, and with a sigh
Rises with difficulty from his bed.

He looks about, and his bewildered brain
Begins to clear. He knows the place at last;
It is the wood close by a field of grain.
His own home will be reached when that is passed.

Slowly he starts upon his lonesome way.
The partridge frightened, buzzes from his path.
The bluebird sings his lay to coming day.
Squirrels from hemlocks chatter as in wrath.

As the first flush of morning breaks o'er lea
And hill, stepping forth from tangled woodland
To where the view unbroken is and free,
Lo what mysterious sight is now at hand.

Through the still night and cool, from earth and streams,
Vapor rising, has settled in the vale.
Quiet as resting water is, it seems,
Smooth as a plain it fills the pleasant dale.

It seems like some great lake encircled round
With shores of green, which in the distance far,
Fades into blue, and nearer may be found
Bright islets or a solitary bar.

And as he looks upon its peaceful breast,
A calm steals gently o'er his troubled soul.
He thinks, if fog so quietly can rest,
He may yet bring himself within control.

But while he looks a slight wind from the south
Comes through the vale, and breaks the thick mist cloud
Into a hundred forms, and sends them north
And east and west, a wild fantastic crowd.

Chasing each other here and there, as though
By some mad spirit driv'n, they rise and fall,
In still increasing strife, now high, now low,
Until from sight they vanish one and all.

If thus by one light breath the clouds, that seemed
Impenetrable to his feeble sight,
Were broken and dispersed, and if he dreamed
He could his own cloud break, was not he right ?

'Twas with this firm resolve he homeward walked.
The smoke already curling from the trees
Told him his wife was up, and as she talked
Unto herself, he fell down at her knees,

In accents broken freely telling her
All he had seen, resolved and thought and done,
And that till she forgave he would not stir.
She should be to his future life the sun.

Freely then did she forgive him, and their tears
Together mingled, as she kneeling down
Prayed God to help, and take away their fears,
And give him strength, and keep him from the town.

IV.

THE BEER-SHOP AND THE HOME.

Woman is like the slender vine,
That seeks support upon the pine,
But when the tree begins to sway,
Proves in itself a shield and stay,
And at its fall is crushed below
Its weight, as by a mortal foe,

While from its wounded tendrils flows
Its life-blood with severest throes,
And as the vine first feels the frost,
And as its life is quickest lost,
So she is first to feel the chill
Of coming want or future ill.

On the third day a neighbor riding by
Asked him if he would help to cut his corn.
"Yes Sir, with pleasure," was the quick reply,
"When shall I come?" He answered, "in the morn."

At early break of day he went his way
Right glad that it was distant from the town,
For even then he knew the first display
Of liquor would be sure to drag him down.

So days passed by, and winter came again,
Farm work was buried in the falling snow;
Not so the trees, and then from cutting grain
He changed to cutting wood, far from his foe.

One night he goes to farmer Barton's home.
His job is done, and he would have his pay.
The farmer, busy with his glass and comb,
Is slicking up the first time for the day.

The supper on the table smoking hot
Demands attention and without delay.
The farmer then exclaims upon the spot,
In his good natured manner, "You must stay."

His wife, with hospitable motives rife,
Adds her kind word, saying, "'Twill do him good
To rest a while and he will have more life
Through snow to wade." This he well understood.

The supper o'er the farmer brings the pay,
And tells his son to bring a glass of drink.
"Just take this glass to stay you on the way.
'Tis cider, it will do you good, I think."

"No, I don't care for any cider now,
I guess I will do well enough without,
I do not care much for it, anyhow."
O tempter! He who conquers thee is stout.

"Are you afraid! 'Tis harmless, some we made."
Kind was the nature prompting him. He thought
He had but hospitality displayed.
He urged him, knowing not the harm he wrought.

But in his neighbor's bosom flames anew
The passion so long kept within control;
His heart thumps hard against his side, and through
His veins, the hot blood coursing fires his soul.

He takes the glass without another word,
And drains it to the dregs, wishing for more.
The demon, that once ruled his life is stirred
To fiercer action now than e'er before.

The stars move on one-fourth their daily round ;
Clouds rise and shut them out from mortal sight ;
The watchman's measured tread is the sole sound ;
The street-light shows strange pictures through the
night.

Within the beer-shop all is life and light ;
Pleasure and mirth run wild and all is gay ;
Nay, I might better say, is falsely bright,
Is but a flimsy sham, which fades away.

Within the cottage by the fireside sat
The wife of one who figures in this scene,
And in her lap half-sleeping lay the cat,
And by her side stood Bruin tall and lean.

She waited for his coming, filled with fears ;
Started at every creak of chair or floor ;
Too deep, her sorrow, for relief by tears ;
In vain, she listened at the shaking door.

In her mind the wildest fancies harrow
Up imaginations, frightful horrors
Grim and ghostly, filling her with sorrow
Worse than death with all his mighty terrors.

Much she suffered while she waited, longing,
Hoping, fearing, trembling, while the wild gust
Smote the shutter, while her fears were thronging
To wage successful war upon her trust.

Every weird imagination, every form
Of death or danger, fills her mind with fears;
Falling trees or glancing ax, cold or storm,
Until she shudders at each sound she hears.

Now restless grows the dog. He seeks the door
With whines and scratches asking to go out,
Then with his ears pricked up stands still before
The window listening as though in doubt.

V.

DEATH.

Oh Death how near thou art,
Of every life a part,
That part the end !
Coming to high and low
When falls thy mighty blow
To thee all bend.

Now he goes out into the depths of night,
Leaving behind the scene of revelry ;
Above his head no stars, to cheer and light,
Are shining forth as though in rivalry.

O'er hill and plain no moonbeam shows his way,
Shifting snow and driving sleet clog his path.
Still he goes slowly on as best he may ;
The gale beats in his face with deadly wrath.

His house is almost reached, but 'tis in vain,
Benumbed with cold, made stupid by the drink,
He falls at length and cannot rise again.
It seems like rest thus in the snow to sink.

Wilder grows the storm, and fiercer, stronger,
On the pane it smites, as she puts on hood
And boots, hesitates to go no longer,
Hears Bruin barking, half way to the wood.

She pushes on, and finds him there at length,
Above his master's prostrate, frozen form.
To raise the man, she tries with all her strength;
She chafes his hands, yet cannot make them warm.

Vain her effort; he is helpless, lying
There amid the snow, she must go to some
Neighbor, leave him there, though he were dying,
And find a man who to his aid would come.

When she returned, they found him lying there,
And near him, Bruin sat, a faithful friend,
Content, the fury of the storm to dare,
If on his master he might thus attend.

When they had borne him from his snowy bed
Into a house, and there used every means
To bring him back to life, he raised his head,
And looking round, knew that he was at Dean's.

“ Good Dean,” said he, when he could speak again,
“ Why did you take such pains to bring me back
To life to be a curse to all, and pain
Like this of death and hell doth nothing lack.”

“ Dear friend, take courage, though you did once fall,
You may regain the path you should have led.”
“ No, I have lost my courage, strength and all,
I cannot stand, I will not try he said.”

But time and sickness brought him to his mind ;
Once more he vowed he'd never drink again ;
Once more for weeks and months you could not find
A kinder man or one who caused less pain.

The wintry blasts had sought their northern tomb ;
The milder breath of spring had come and gone ;
The daffodils and lilacs lost their bloom ;
The seedtime ripened to the harvest's dawn.

The noisy mower and the loads of hay
Told that the farmer's busy time was here.
The vacant village streets told of small pay
For dry goods stores, not for those selling beer.

Their business lasts throughout the entire year.
In cold, men say they drink to keep them warm,
In summer's heat, to give them strength. No fear,
No poverty can drive away the swarm.

In harvest-fields the farmers have their drink
To give them strength and courage for their work.
The temperance men take cider, for they think
Not of the spirits bad which in it lurk.

It was in such a field, indeed, our friend
Was offered cider, drank it and went mad.
At midnight as he walks the street, attend
How strangely wild his cries, his thoughts how sad.

“O God they come! the devil and his train.
I'm lost! The earth gapes open; I shall sink.
The monster! Save me, save me, I am slain!
The fire of hell is hot, O give me drink!”

“Ugh! See those spiders, kill them, kill, Oh kill!
’Tis awful to be eaten up alive.
Get off! Oh strike them! See they wont keep still!
Oh help! They’re everywhere, drive faster, drive!”

The weak old frame cannot stand such a strain.
In the soft dawn of day, they carry home
All that remains of him, while gentle rain
Tolls his knell, and mourning arches heav’n’s dome.

Let no one say, that he who lay so still,
Was less than man. No eyes more kind e’er smiled
On beauty mild or with love’s light did fill.
No heart more true by sin was e’er beguiled.

In the quiet country church-yard,
Where the willow ever stands guard,
Buried they this man whose kind heart
Led him on to act the fool's part.

There, through fair and cloudy weather
Birds of gloomy hue and feather
Tell in tender notes their sorrow ;
Flowers bloom to fade to-morrow.

And the hawthorn showers its tear-drops,
While the breeze steals through the tree-tops,
Telling you to guard your kind heart,
If you would not play the fool's part.

THE OAK.

The chestnut boughs sway softly to and fro;
The fitful shadows slowly come and go;
The marsh land bristles with its crests of pine,
And purple fruitage clusters on the vine.

The wild duck, startled, wings its airy way;
The squirrels chatter madly in their play,
And seek the winter's store while days are fair;
Each for his future good thus taking care.

An acorn falls from yonder oaken limb;
A dormouse, thinking it was meant for him,
Bears it away, and hides it in the earth,
Where it may be of use in time of dearth.

The seasons move in their accustomed way;
The mouse itself becomes at length a prey;
The radiant spring-time comes around again,
And robes in beauty every hill and plain.

The hidden springs of life are stronger far,
Than shackles made of clay, or iron bar.
The acorn bursts its shell and seeks the light
And sends a tender shoot up into sight.

The wheel of time moves on, and as it turns,
The slender oak tree rises o'er the ferns.
The winter storms beat fiercely on the tree
Bending its body and its branches free.

Its fibre toughens by the constant strain.
In summer, driven by the want of rain,
Its roots strike deeper in the stubborn ground,
Until the tree to earth is firmly bound.

You want a stick, on which you can depend,
Take not the willow, but the hill ascend;
There stands the oak, in all its native strength,
Unharmed by storms, you've found your stick at length.

I.

THE HOME.

Our grandfathers were young, you know,
Less than a hundred years ago,
And forests covered all the state,
Waiting for man to seal their fate.

But up the Mohawk valley moved
A tide of emigrants, who proved
The settlers of this lonely waste.
The fruits they labored for we taste.

Among this westward moving tide
A young man and his blushing bride
Went forth to seek in solitude
A place to build a dwelling rude.

They found it just beneath a hill
Beside a pretty little rill,
Which purled along its stony bed,
And quickly to the river led.

A spring of water pure and clear
Flowed from a bank as though to cheer
Those, who athirst might come that way
Beneath the summer's scorching ray.

A pleasant site was quickly found;
The woodman's ax gave forth the sound
Which told that man at length was here,
And bade surrounding forests fear.

The shining logs were soon in place;
The roof and floor, though lacking grace,
Pleased those who had beneath the dome
Of heaven slept, for want of home.

Through summer's heat and winter's cold
And trials better left untold,
They labored till the farm was cleared,
By hopes of future comfort cheered.

Meanwhile a son, wee, pretty thing,
Came, to their home, sunshine to bring.
The years rolled on and others came,
Beside the hearth, a place to claim.

The old log house gave up its place
To one which had a modern face;
The boys themselves to men had grown,
And left their home, but not alone.

One only with his father stayed
Beside the river, where he played
Before his brothers had a share
In mother's love or mother's care.

But even he was not content,
Till, with his father's kind consent,
He brought one day a charming wife,
To be the comfort of his life.

He loved the wood, he loved the hill,
He loved the river calm and still,
But ere three summers came around
The ties of love still tighter bound.

For baby lisped his papa's name,
When to his noon-day meal he came,
And mamma praised the wondrous boy,
Her face all radiant with joy.

No name was good enough for him.
A friend proposed to call him Tim,
But Tim they said would never do,
And Jack was soon rejected too.

The only name which seemed to fit,
Was John, and so they christened it
John Harding, for his mother's name
Was Harding, he must have the same.

No playmate came to share his home
And with him through the wild wood roam,
But in the house across the way
There lived a girl, they called her May.

And as they were just of an age,
You might as well have tried to cage
A flea, as try to keep apart
These children, from the very start.

O passing happy were the days,
When these two children at their plays,
Spent all their time from morning light
Till parents called them home at night.

And when the sun has sunk to rest
Behind the hills far to the west,
Then John kneels for his evening prayer
Beside his mother calm and fair.

He clasps his hands, and lifts his eyes
Serene and blue as summer skies,
The mild light falling on his face,
Gives to it unaccustomed grace.

For just a moment all is still,
Except the water at the mill,
Then on the soft air of the night,
His accents break so pure and bright.

“Jesus hear a little child,
Give to me thy spirit mild,
Keep me through the dark of night,
Let me see the morning light,
And remember little May,
Keep her till another day.”

Then the mother's love and longing
And what thoughts her heart were thronging
Were revealed in her petition
Telling of her high ambition.

“Father grant thy richest blessing
To this child who kneels addressing
Prayer to Thee.
Through this world of sin and sorrow
May he always freely borrow
Strength from Thee.
May it ever be his pleasure
To gain stores of heavenly treasure,
Souls for Thee.

Use him to thy greatest glory
Where he best may tell the story,
Christ, of Thee.
And to Thee shall be the praises,
Which each rescued sinner raises,
All to Thee."

Ah! she little knew the meaning
Of the words which she was gleaning,
Little guessed the pain and sorrow
Of some dark and distant morrow.

II.

CHILDHOOD.—FISHING.

Did you ever fish for trout
While the rain-drops fell about?
Did you ever watch a hook
In the water of the brook?

Did you watch your chances still
Till you felt a sudden thrill?
When you saw the captive trout,
Were you not inclined to shout?

You may search the raging seas,
Or the mill-pond, if you please,
Or the river or the lake,
Better fish you cannot take.

It is always fine to fish,
If you only get your wish;
But for pleasure you will own,
One should never fish alone.

But the little boy of eight,
While he tends the lively bait,
Finds more pleasure, it is plain,
Than he ever will again.

The midday sun, in splendor clad,
Shone down upon the little lad,
As with his hook and line he took
His way down to the quiet brook.

But hardly had he fixed his bait,
And told it how he mourned its fate,
When little May, with smiling face,
Made her appearance at the place.

She brought along her fishing-line
Made of a piece of cotton twine.
A pin, bent to the proper crook,
Served very well the place of hook.

John fixed the worms, and for a space,
Watched the light movements of the dace,
And then they threw the tempting bait,
Which lured the fishes to their fate.

They fished until their bait was lost,
Then on the ground their tackle tossed,
And waded slowly down the rill
To the great river deep and still.

There, seated on the mossy bank
Amid the brakes, which tall and rank
Spread out their feathers to the air,
They listen to the songsters fair.

They watch the bubbles floating past
Until some eddy holds them fast,
Or, getting in the backward tide,
Float up the stream along the side.

They see the leafy green above,
And sweetly dream of future love.
They see the sunfish darting by,
Then quickly springing for a fly.

They rise and holding to a tree,
Down in the stream their faces see,
Framed by the overhanging fern,
Then from the picture slowly turn.

Then on a sandy bank they found
Where fragrant wintergreens abound.
The ruby berries peeping out
Drew forth at once a gleeful shout.

But when the day was almost spent,
Back to their homes, they gaily went.
Their path through tangled bushes led,
Poplar and cherry arched o'erhead.

Fit emblem of the path of life
With vexing problems often rife,
So tangled and so narrow, still
It leads us safe through good or ill.

Blithe as the birds that sang above,
Sweet as the notes of turtle-dove,
They sang as through the woods they pressed,
Thinking at length of home and rest.

"We are happy as the flower
Smiling in the gentle shower,
Laughing in the sunlight gaily,
Opening to meet it daily;

"Or the bee when getting honey,
Or the miser counting money,
Or an eagle soaring lightly
O'er the mountain tall and sightly;

"Or the cattle when 'tis sunny,
Or the humming-bird so funny,
Or the war-horse lightly prancing
When the army is advancing.

“Thus another day is ended,
With its joy no sorrow blended.
Thus the stream of life is flowing.
To the ocean quickly going.”

But summer brings the fall at length;
The ice forms with increasing strength;
The sleds and skates are in demand,
And crystals white o’er all the land.

Now papa says his darling boy
Has long enough remained his toy;
He must do something more than play,
Or through the tangled forest stray.

The safest way to make a man,
In fact, the only pleasing plan,
Is to instruct him while a child
In learning, as ’tis sometimes styled.

So off to school, must Johnny start,
Though he abhors it from his heart;
But in the school-house by the mill,
He is the same good Johnny still,

And through the test of coming days,
Is ever gentle at his plays.
His love for mother and the rest
Is ever safe within his breast.

III.

THE DREAM.

Dream on fair sleeper,
May thy dream,
Of sorrow deeper,
Bring no gleam.

Dream on, and waking
Shape thy way;
Through darkness breaking,
Seek the day.

And may each morrow
Sweet and fair,
Be free from sorrow,
Sin and care.

When past life's dreaming,
False or true,
May brightness gleaming
Fall on you.

The days and years go on their way,
Till John is sixteen to a day.
His life has been without dispute,
One of the very best repute.

But who is perfect in the sight
Of God, who dwells in purest light,
And judges goodness by his own,
To whom the slightest sin is known.

John knew a curse was on the race,
And felt the need of saving grace.
He yielded to the Saviour's call,
And gave his heart, his life, his all.

One night, while lying on his bed,
A dream filled all his soul with dread;
But in his future life it proved
A motive, which to action moved.

When morning dawned with peaceful light
He rose to greet its coming bright.
"Mother," at last he slowly said,
"I dreamed last night that I was dead."

"Ah! but when it was all over,
Death seemed easy, just to hover
For a moment o'er the current
Of a black and angry torrent,

"Then to fall, but in the falling,
Hear above me voices calling,
Feel my burden growing lighter,
See the sky above me brighter.

"Then to feel within me growing,
While through endless spaces going,
Strength to give my course direction,
Needing not a guide's protection.

"O the rich, enchanting pleasure
Of thus roaming at your leisure
Where in thought you often wandered
When upon the sky you pondered ;

"On through systems without number
With no mortal care to cumber,
Free to search the page of learning,
To each star and planet turning.

"As the thought, from sun to planet,
Or from Maine to Rocky's granite,
Moves in time too short to measure,
So my soul moved, though at leisure.

"Then I came to that blest region
Where the spirits of a legion
Rest in everlasting glory,
As is told in sacred story ;

"Saw the fields of living splendor,
Which no human tongue can render,
Though from every language gleaning
Words of richest, brightest meaning.

- “Saw the river of salvation,
Flowing out to every nation,
Bringing life to every creature,
Giving beauty to each feature;
- “Saw the tree of life, which, growing
By the river ever flowing,
Bears the leaves for sinners’ healing,
Every wound forever sealing.
- “Saw the fair eternal city
Where there is no need for pity ;
For amid these heavenly wonders,
Neither sin nor sickness plunders.
- “Saw the Christ the King of glory ;
Heard them tell his wondrous story,
How from death to life he raises ;
Heard them chant a Saviour’s praises ;
- “Wondered at his grace and beauty,
And the servants, who on duty,
Stood before His throne eternal,
Giving praise to the Supernal ;
- “Saw there people of each nation
On the face of all creation ;
Heard a million voices blended,
As they on the Lord attended.

“There I stood upon the border,
Waiting for the Master’s order
To approach and hear my sentence,
Thinking of my late repentance.

“Then the heart within me fluttered
As I heard a shrill cry uttered,
And I shivered as I listened,
And to find the speaker hastened;

“For that cry so full of sorrow,
Could no added terror borrow;
And it filled with apprehension,
Holding firmly my attention.

“First, upon the footstool gazing,
Heard there human voices raising
Songs, like incense rich ascending,
Or with curses harshly blending.

“Then, into the gloomy distance,
For no space could give resistance
To the spirit’s piercing vision,
Looking, saw with great precision.

“There among the wretched, standing
With a countenance commanding,
Was a maiden fair and slender.
Once her eyes were pure and tender;

“Now with desperation glaring,
On my face her look was bearing.
In her eyes I saw derision,
And her words came with precision:

“Think not you will live forever,
Fear and sorrow reach you never.
You, who knew a Saviour’s mercies,
Might have saved a friend from curses.

“On your head my blood remaineth,
To your charge my death pertaineth,
For had you but given warning,
Night for me had brought the morning.

“May the God you trust, beholding
All your secret life unfolding,
Bring upon your head of curses,
More than soul could wish of mercies.

“From that awful imprecation,
Shrinking at the information,
Turned I then with fear and trembling,
Which I vainly tried dissembling;

“Turned to hear the words repeated
While I hastily retreated,
‘On your head my blood remaineth,
To your charge my death pertaineth.’

“Through my thoughts the words kept ringing,
And the angels seemed all singing,
‘On your head her blood remaineth,
To your charge her death pertaineth.’

“Then I seemed to shrink and shiver,
Like one drowning in the river,
And at length, from sleep awaking,
Found my head severely aching.”

IV.

LAST WORDS.

Last words are always sweeter far
Than the soft touch of music's bar,
They tell the feelings of the soul
When stirred almost beyond control;
But only those who have a part
In the deep feelings of the heart,
Know all the depths which lie below
The surface of their quiet flow.

“Dearest mother, I am going
Far away where men are showing
What they willingly endure,
Others' freedom to secure.”

“What, my John, you will not leave me,
For you know how it would grieve me;
You are far too frail for fighting,
Nor to you is it delighting.”

“Mother, it is my chief desire
To do my Master’s will entire;
The country is in need of men
To drive the rebels from their den.

“You would not have me stay away,
While clouds hang o’er our country’s day,
While chains are on the negro’s limb,
And freedom’s lamp is burning dim.”

“No, John, do what you think is right,
And this remember in the fight
Or on the march or in your bed,
My blessing rests upon your head.

“But on your knees here bending low,
Before I say that you may go,
Promise, whatever may befall,
You’ll never taste strong drink at all.”

“Never, dear mother. I am glad
To leave alone that which is bad,
And you may trust me to maintain
My promise at whatever pain.”

“Yes, John,”—her hand was on his head;
Her fancy pictured him as dead;
She saw him stretched upon the ground
With bleeding comrades all around.

She saw him lonely in his tent,
And almost feared he might repent
The solemn promise he had made
Before he drew the warrior’s blade.

But well she knew beneath those curls
Lay what is better far than pearls,
A will to know and do the right,
And keep his honor ever bright;

And well she knew, that sin and wine
Are not as strong as strength divine,
And if his strength should prove too small
He’d draw from the great fount of all.

“God bless my boy,” at last she said,
“And lead you safe through dangers dread,
If it may be his gracious will,
Back to your home beneath the hill.”

The days too fast are gliding by,
For last days ever quickly fly.
The time is now almost at hand,
To-morrow night he joins the band.

The falling shades, the summer air,
Grace his young form so tall and fair,
While slowly by the brook he strays
Where once he wandered in his plays.

There, in a quiet little nook,
Forgetful of her open book,
Sat May, her face turned to the sky,
A dreamy look within her eye.

The gentle rustle of the grass,
As quietly he tried to pass,
Breaking her fascinating dream
Brought to her eye a pleasing gleam.

She rose to meet him, with a smile,
And with him spend a little while
In parting words, for well she knew
His friendship ever would be true.

They took the way beside the rill
Down to the river bank, for still
They liked to watch the quiet flow
With bubbles bursting as they go.

They came to where his little boat
Tugged at its chain, as though to float
Upon the stream was its delight
Through sunny noon or gloomy night.

They take their seats, he at the oar,
She in the stern, as oft before,
And while the hours swiftly glide
Chat, all forgetful of the tide.

Now something grating on the boat
Tells them they are no more afloat,
But fast upon some stump or stone
Out in the river all alone ;

And turn whichever way they will,
They only swing about it still,
And when at last they get away,
They feel they should no longer stay.

Then he rows up the winding stream,—
All seems like some mysterious dream ;
He almost doubts if it is true,
That he is dressed in soldier's blue.

They hear the water's distant roar
And gentle splash of dipping oar.
They see the soft blue of the sky
And bright stars in their pathway lie.

The ripples widen to the bank
Where grow the alders, tall and rank,
Or, here and there, beneath the brush,
Beside the water grows the rush.

The hazlenut and leaning beach
Here overhang within their reach.
One tree with top half dead and dry,
Stands pointing stiffly to the sky.

Long shadows on the water cast
Make them more gloomy toward the last,
While now and then a fleecy cloud
Covers the moon as with a shroud.

But now they reach the landing-place,
And to the house their pathway trace.
The soft light of the crescent high
Reveals them to no mortal eye.

Day follows night, and in this day
John's feet must take the untried way,
Which leads him from his peaceful home
Through southern lands to sadly roam.

'Mid all the life of harvest's hum
The time to part at length has come.
The brazen sun looks down again
With scorching glance upon the plain.

But when at times we try to trace
The deeper feelings of our race,
We find the language far too weak
The heart's emotions deep to speak.

We only tell the parting grasp,
As hands together fondly clasp;
The silent quiver of the lid
Above the eye, which would be hid;

The trembling of the tight-pressed lip
At first sound of the driver's whip;
The words, which seem like idle sound
Compared with feelings so profound.

In vain, we seek with artist's skill
To paint the current strong and still,
Which flows beneath the surface where
You'd think that all was calm and fair.

So let us pass with John away
Where rockets glare and bullets play
And music mingles with their hum,
The bugle blast and noise of drum.

And let us leave this country place
Where tall elms with their arching grace
Invite to rest beneath the shade
Or sport a while upon the glade.

V.

THE WAR.

Let the war-horse prance
When the bugles call.
Let his eager glance
Give courage to all.

Let the brave man's heart
Be firm in his breast.
Let him do his part
And his name is blest.

But at home he leaves,
When he goes, a heart,
Which faints as it grieves
For its stronger part.

And oft in the grave
Does a frail form rest
Ere the chilly wave
Strikes the warrior's breast.

In camp or on the tiresome march,
Beneath the ash or lonesome larch,
Temptation in its changing shape,
The soldier scarcely can escape.

Thrown with companions rough and bad,
Temptation meets the soldier lad
So often, that he soon becomes
As used to sin as noise of drums.

John met temptation day by day,
Within his tent or on the way,
With faith, the Christian warrior's shield,
And firm resolve no ground to yield.

And often some pretended friend
Would try his forward course to bend
By urging him to drink or smoke,
But he was firm as seasoned oak.

And others came to know his worth,
And praise the day that gave him birth;
For, in the camp or on the field;
Kind words and deeds must fruitage yield.

Now the remembrance of the night
When death seemed opened to his sight
Urged him to speak his Master's name,
And tell the Saviour's wondrous fame.

And chances sought are always found,
One scarcely needs to look around
To see them staring in his face
From every unexpected place.

The battle with its murderous din,
The camp-life with its ways of sin,
Both furnish chances to repeat
The secret of a safe retreat.

He found it pleasant, on the way,
To guide the feet once gone astray,
And bring back to the Saviour's fold
One who to sin his life had sold.

He found it good to sit beside
The youth whose life flowed with the tide,
The crimson tide that drained his heart,
And point him to the Saviour's part.

He found it sweet to give the cup,
Which dying lips would wildly sup,
And take the message for a friend,
Which dying lips would gladly send.

Nor did he lack in valiant deeds,
For well he won the soldier's meeds.
No braver faced the fiery rain,
Which streaked the ground with crimson stain.

But he who draws the bloody blade
By it may fall upon the glade,
For courage in the heat of strife
Will not retain the ebbing life.

Nor will the stern face scare away
Death's messenger when bullets play.
He meets the warrior face to face
E'en at the goal of glory's race.

He takes the life but not the fame,
Nor is that buried with his frame;
It lasts while there is one to raise
To heav'n in song the soldier's praise.

Not every soldier's praise is sung
By name, by any mortal tongue,
But Freedom chants her morning lay
To all who helped her on the way.

John seemed to bear a charm of life,
And faced unhurt the fiercest strife.
Some said the angels came below
To shield him from the deadly blow.

But while he stands among the rest
Where solid squares, like ocean's crest,
Break and fall back, then rise again,
We can but hear the sad refrain.

We cannot see the joys that gleam
From his mild eyes while ringlets stream
In the soft breeze as fair to-day
As when a child he kneeled to pray.

We cannot watch him while he strays
Where weak and dying on him gaze,
Or tell him secrets ere they sleep
That sleep which would all secrets keep.

Nor can we catch the look of love,
Sweet as the sunshine from above,
While all alone each week he reads
Letters which praise his manly deeds.

We cannot trace the way he led
Through thicket, swamp or rocky bed,
Where cedars grow, or lofty pine,
And trailing vines about them twine.

So let us now, no longer try,
Into his secret life to pry,
But turn the page and read again
Life's joyous close or sad refrain.

VI.

LAST SCENES.

Within the hush of darkened room
Where friends sit watching by the bed
Death, stealing in amid the gloom,
Fixes his grasp on heart and head.

Upon the street or in the shop
Where all is hurry, all is life,
He comes the wheels of life to stop,
And end for one this constant strife.

On battle-field or in the camp
He views the host and marks the name,
Then in the woods or marshes damp
Captures the prize for which he came.

His message comes the same to all,
Sought or unsought, unlooked for still,
From toil and strife the welcome call
Or the dark plunge in waters chill.

The bloody years drag slowly past
Until the war has reached its last.
Each breeze, that fans the northern sky,
Whispers the moans of those that die.

The elms and maples catch the sigh
From some one that is passing by,
And breath it on the morning air
Filling the atmosphere with care.

Above the homes the battle-cloud
Is darker than the sulphur shroud,
Which hangs above the very spot
Where rages battle thick and hot.

For three long years John's letters came
Then stopped, though who might be to blame,
No one could tell, for no one knew
The fate of him who was so true.

His mother used to watch the way
Down which he might come home some day,
And wonder what had been his fate.
Often her lamp burned very late.

Was he in prison now confined,
And had his body slowly pined,
Until she would not know his face
Were he his homeward way to trace?

Then her wild fancy pictured him
Among a crowd which, sad and grim,
Lives in a yard like beasts confined,
Starving the body and the mind.

She saw him sick upon the ground
With skeletons all standing round
While curses on their Maker's name
Or low jests from them often came;

No friend to cheer, no hand to lave
His brow when fevers wildly rave,
No sweet voice with its gentle sound
Brings comfort as the days go round;

His only fare a crust of bread
And water; better he were dead.
No hope remains to give him strength;
He only longs to rest at length.

Now changing with her changing mood,
Another chick from fancies brood
Comes peeping up to tell its woe,
As fitful shadows come and go.

She sees the shell burst close to him,
And rend his body limb from limb.
Again she sees her brave boy fall
Among the sumacs by the wall.

Her fancy pictures every leaf,
As fancy can when urged by grief,
Stained by the blood that slowly drips
From Johnny's side or Johnny's lips.

This doubting and this vague unrest,
This constant strife within her breast
Is worse to bear than news of death;
It seems to hush her very breath.

Nor does she suffer thus alone;
The wistful glance, the softened tone,
Tells her that one across the way
Pines for the friend of former day.

May faded like the fading leaf.
Her life like its was fair but brief.
Too slender were her earthly ties
To keep her spirit from the skies.

They laid her form at last to rest.
Her hands were folded on her breast.
A pure white lily in her hair
Seemed of her beauty emblem fair.

A rose bush grows beside her grave;
Each spring its blossoms gently wave,
And shed their perfume on the air
Above the sweet form resting there.

One day a man came down the road,
Beneath the sun that fiercely glowed,
As if to burn the very earth
Like tinder placed upon the hearth.

His form was thin, his haggard face
Of want and care bore every trace;
He tottered as he reached the door,
And sat down there upon the floor.

Who was this stranger who thus came
Within her door? She asked his name;
He answered that he was the one
Who fought beside her noble son.

“And can you tell me how he fell?
He must be dead I know full well,
But I have never chanced to hear
And so lived on in doubt and fear.”

“Yes, it is true that he has gone.
We took the field that day at dawn,
And fought until the midday sun
Beheld the battle almost won.

“Not ours the victory that day,
The rebel army had their say,
And as we had fought side by side
We fell and lay till eventide.

“His wound was mortal, and his head
Lay on my breast. The stream of red
Was bearing on his gentle life,
To that great sea that’s free from strife.

“Not one complaint escaped his heart;
He was not loath with life to part;
He only said ‘I’m going home—
Tell mother please—no more to roam.

“‘Tell her and May, I’ll meet them there,
Eternal pleasures with them share.
Tell them the glory of that life
Will well repay this earthly strife.’

“Then looking up into my face,
‘Friend have you chosen God’s free grace?
And shall I meet you with the rest
Among that throng forever blest?’

“‘I choose him now,’ was my reply,
A sudden light filling his eye,
Raising one hand to meet his friend,
With sweetest smile he met his end.

“The silver moon shone o’er the field
Where many eyes by death were sealed
When men, who wore the southern gray,
With softened looks bore him away.

“They buried him beside the road
Near to a little brook, which flowed
With gentle music on its way
O’er pebbles set in sand or clay.

“I heard them, as they looked at him
Even in death so fair and trim,
Say, ‘see the smile upon his face,
He’s reached the goal and won the race.’

“No marble slab marks out the spot,
No cedar hedge shuts in the lot,
No short-cut grass, no little mound,
Tells where his resting place is found;

“But near the spot the live oak stands
Encircled by the slender bands
Of blooming vine with leafage deep
Swaying above his quiet sleep.

“The wild flower, the spicy plant,
Perfume the air while falls aslant,
The sunbeam on the hero's grave,
And birds sing of his actions brave.”

THE BROKEN VOW.

The world turns round, and as it turns each day
The sun looks on no fairer land than this;
Yet in the valley, or beside the way,
Where rivers roll, or waves imprint their kiss
On jutting rocks, or on the sandy beach,
Deeds which would make us blush for very shame,
And hide our faces where no glance could reach,
If we could see them, knowing whence they came,
Deeds which still cry aloud to God above
For vengeance on this proud and wicked race,
Which renders hatred for Almighty love,
Glare boldly out, or hide in every place.

I.

TWO HOMES.

Far from the rugged shores where ocean's waves
Toss pebbles out upon the sandy beach,
Within a valley where a river laves
The sandstone rocks which lie within its reach,

A trapper reared his cabin years ago,
And brought his wife and child to share the home
Where chestnut branches waving to and fro
Shut in their sight and formed an arching dome.

One day the trapper, resting 'neath the shade,
Heard the sharp crack of rifle on the air.
He started from the hillock, nor delayed,
To find what stranger might be hunting there.

Nor twig, nor leaf gave forth the slightest sound,
Beneath that trained and safely muffled tread.
Silence held sway through all the wood around.
Man's presence only, made that silence dread.

At last he looks forth shyly o'er a bank.
A tall young man with curly auburn hair,
Beside the brook where brakes are thick and rank,
Bathes perspiration from his temples fair.

"Well, friend, how goes the hunt?" the trapper said;
"How many partridge have you shot to-day?
How many brace of ducks have felt your lead?
How many squirrels given up their play?"

The stranger then with smiling face displayed
A bag well filled with many kinds of game,
And out upon the bank its contents laid,
Looking meanwhile with pleasure at the same.

"Yes, I have had good luck," the stranger said,
"Fortune hath perched upon my gun to-day,
Nor from the morning until now hath fled,
But seemed to guide me in a favored way."

“You must live near, or you would seek a place
To pass the night, for now the slanting beam
Tells us 'tis time our footsteps to retrace,
And night is nearer than at first 'twould seem.”

“My home is near; father has bought a farm
And built on it; and soon I hope to reach
It safe, and save my mother from alarm,
For she is timid since we left the beach,

“And would be frightened should I not return
From hunting at the closing hour of day,
Before the dew has fallen on the fern,
And she would think me lost upon the way.”

“Well, when you want a friend just call on me;
I know this region well, there's not a stream
Or rock, a muskrat path or hollow tree,
But oft I mark it while you farmers dream.”

And so they part, one tracing up the brook,
Now leaping mossy logs, now bending low
To pass a leaning tree, and now a nook,
In which the stream with deeper, smoother flow

Draws near the bank, breaking upon his sight
In beauty such as nature oft affords,
Holds captive youthful sense with strange delight
And wonder at the treasure nature hoards.

He reaches home, and at the open door
His sister meets him with the welcome kiss.
With mirth she strews the game upon the floor.
She coos with pleasure over this and this.

His mother gives her sweet approving smile;
His father praises him, and all are glad
That from his roving for tull many a mile
They meet again at eve the hunter lad.

The trapper hastes upon his homeward way,
By paths which others could not hope to trace,
To reach his fireside ere the shadows gray,
Fold up their wings, and settle on the place.

The whistle sharp from unseen distant quail,
The woodcock's clatter and the cuckoo's call,
To him are signs of storm that never fail,
The truthful words of nature one and all.

His home is reached. His wife, though glad he's come,
Says sharply to him, "Well, you're rather late."
The children meet him with a noisy hum.
"Supper is ready, father, do not wait."

One only greets him with a pleasant smile.
She is his oldest, but his darling yet.
He takes his seat, telling his luck meanwhile,
And bidding baby not to cry or fret.

II.

THE TRAPPER'S DAUGHTER.

Time is busy, ever busy, culling flowers from our life;
Though the days are fraught with pleasure, time is urging
on to strife.

Summer skies may smile above us, skies without a single
cloud,

But the earth and all about us soon is wrapped in crystal
shroud.

Thus is pleasure ever fleeting, and its joys we scarcely know
Ere the waves of sorrow meet us, and its billows o'er us flow.

The trapper often meets the farmer's son—
Ned, as they call him—in the woodland ways,
And soon the boy has learned to like his fun,
And for his stories has a word of praise.

One day the rain o'ertakes their weary feet,
And drives them to the trapper's cabin near.
They soon within its shelter find retreat
Where rain at least need cause them little fear.

They laugh and talk while fleeting moments speed,
The trapper telling stories new and old,
Of wild adventure and courageous deed,
On lake or river, or in mountain hold.

When rain has stopped, and night is coming fast,
Ned, rising, says 'tis time for him to go ;
And so he leaves the trapper's home at last,
And takes his way 'neath branches bending low,

Thinking meanwhile not of the setting sun,
Hurling its gilded shafts among the trees,
And dropping them around him one by one ;
Nor thinks he now of any thing he sees ;

But on the trapper's daughter is his mind,
And thus he talks while going on his way,
Leaving the object of his thoughts behind,
Together with the closing hours of day.

"Sweet as an angel ; no, she is more fair ;
Those eyes would make the dullest fireside bright.
When have I seen such waves of auburn hair ?
Her form is graceful, rounded out, yet slight.

"Her lips are like a perfume-breathing rose,
Yes, she is fair, too fair for such a place.
The brightest bloom in deepest forest grows
Where it may hide the beauty of its face

"For one who seeks in solitude to find
The rarest treasure in the fairest form,
The brightest face, the richest, sweetest mind,
The heart with true affection filled and warm.

“Fool am I, to be captured by a face?
Is worth in wealth, in wealth and there alone?
The gem is rare, where'er its hiding-place;
Does not its luster far more than atone

“For lowly birth? and is not all our wealth
Wrought out from nature by the artist's skill?
Are riches always preferable to health?
From a dry well can you the bucket fill?

“Her voice is pleasing to my longing ear;
Her temper mild makes her a little shy;
As shines the raindrop so would shine her tear,
And brighter still would gleam her flashing eye

“When clouds and showers all had cleared away.
But I must cease this speaking thoughts aloud,
For home is near. I'll go another day.
How can I banish all this turbid crowd?”

The path along the little winding brook,
And through the forest to the trapper's hut,
Was plainer ere the frosty autumn took
Possession of the forest flower and nut,

Painting the leaves with a beauty rare,
Dropping the nuts through the chilly air,
Shaking them down from the limbs on high,
Making the ground to rival the sky,

Filling the air with the notes of bird,
Making the voice of the squirrel heard,
Lulling the earth to its quiet sleep
Under the folds of its blankets deep.

The spring has come and fragrance fills the air;
The trees are robed in all the shades of green;
The wood is bright with flowers everywhere,
And trailing vines enrich the forest scene.

The silver moonlight falling through the trees,
Dancing about as branches slowly sway
Beneath the impulse of the gentle breeze,
Unites in mystic sport with shadows gray.

Fit time, indeed, for lover's thoughts to rise.
What wonder Ned now tells her of his love,
And she with loving confidence replies,
While stars and moon are witnesses above.

O fatal union of these loving hearts !
O happiness lit to go out in pain !
O actors playing well your several parts,
You too, shall play ere long the sad refrain !

The morrow saw him try a dreaded task.
While in the field he with his father stood,
At length he ventured his consent to ask.
"You cannot—and you would not if you could."

He pleaded love, but pleaded it in vain,
His father still more firmly made reply,
"Never, my son, speak thus to me again,
Or I will oust you, by the powers on high.

"You know she is below you, far below,
How dare you calmly ask for my consent ?
Such union would mean naught to you but woe,
To live with her you'd never be content.

"She and her children shall not eat my bread ;
I warn you fairly, and you'd best beware ;
Sooner I'd see all of my children dead,
Than leave my money to a worthless heir."

Ned vowed within that he would have her yet,
He would not yield, whate'er might be his fate.
Could he be false ? Could he his love forget ?
He would not tell her now, at any rate.

He went to see her : found her just as fair.
He was bewitched, and only loved her more.
She seemed more sweet beneath the summer air
Than she had ever seemed to him before.

Beneath the shadows now he softly speaks
The words of passion, rather than of truth,
Nor knows she that the very thing he seeks
Would blast affection even in its youth.

Again he takes his homeward way alone;
The trees in proud disdain seem looking down;
He speaks, but trembles at the ghostly tone.
“Am I a beast, a false deceitful clown?

“Have I deceived myself, as well as her?
Cursed be the luck that brought me to their door.
How could I love the daughter of that cur?
Why did I not see things like this before?

“Well, let it drop. I'll not go there again.
I'll seek some one more suited to me now;
Better brief mourning than a life of pain;
Better to break a promise than a vow.”

And so, perhaps, this young deceiver thought,
But I suggest a way that's better yet.
Think first with what the promise may be fraught,
Nor speak a word which you would fain forget.

He kept his promise, made unto himself,
And sought no more the trapper's lowly hut.
His hunting bag lay empty on the shelf;
His little chamber door was always shut.

For he had gone away to spend a time
With friends, that he might heal his aching heart.
For though his love had perished in its prime,
His wounded feelings did not cease to smart.

III.

THE FRUIT OF SIN.

The fairest rose that blossoms in the morn
At noon may lie all withered and forlorn.
The brightest hope that warms a mother's breast
May soonest change the dwelling of its rest,
Or like the blossom trampled on the ground,
It too in ruin early may be found.

The' chilling blast was sighing 'mid the trees,
The leaves were scattered broadcast on the ground,
The zephyrs, yielding to the sterner breeze,
A milder clime had quickly sought and found.

Beneath the bare limbs and the cloudless sky
The trapper's daughter sadly walked alone.
"Deserted!" was her oft repeated cry,
Despair was marked in every look and tone.

"O Ned, come back! I love you even now.
The world is cold, and you are of the world,
Else you would not thus break your solemn vow.
One look, one whisper, ere my life is hurled

"Deep in the vortex whence it ne'er can rise!
O let me know that you do not forget!
Let me once more look in your loving eyes,
And I will die without the least regret!

"It cannot be. When you shall come again
The stream shall flow above this broken heart,
Which trusted you, but found its trust in vain,
For you have pierced it with a fatal dart.

"I love you still, and may you never know,
That thus I die our common guilt to hide;
And may you never feel such chilling woe,
If you but truly mourn because I died.

"The stream is cold, the current strong and swift,
Where will it lay my body down to rest?
Perhaps, where sands will cover, it will drift;
Perhaps a rock will press this weary breast.

"Yet sands and rocks will safely guard the form
Trusted into their cold but true embrace;
But man does not protect it from the storm
Of ridicule, but crowns it with disgrace.

"No one would love me now, so let me die,
The world will be the better when I'm gone,
Perhaps my father may be heard to sigh
To-morrow when they miss me at the dawn.

"Perhaps a tear may stain my mother's cheek;
Yet they will think of me as simply dead,
Not knowing all the woe from which I seek
To snatch my wretched heart and weary head.

“Here is the rock from which I mean to spring;
The stream is dark, I dread its chilling wave;
The world is darker, colder, and the sting
Of blasting scorn more bitter than the grave.

“Hush now, my heart, why should you flutter so?
Are you impatient like my spirit, too?
'Tis but to leave a world of bitter woe,
And base injustice; yet 'tis hard to do.”

Thus, hesitating, half afraid she stands,
Looking into the silent, peaceful stream,
Then glancing upward, stretches out her hands,
Takes the last look with eyes that wildly gleam,

And falling forward, seals her wretched fate.
Her tresses flutter in the moon-lit air;
Her lovely face gives forth no sign of hate;
The stream receives her to its faithful care;

It cools the brow and stills the beating heart;
It bathes the tear-stained cheeks with soothing touch;
It smoothes the tresses with consummate art;
No earthly woe can fix on her its clutch.

Yet she was rash to throw away her life,
For neither stream nor mountain, hill or dell,
Can hide the sinner from pursuing strife;
Nor yet could heaven, or the depths of hell.

Oh ! why should she be bound to suffer so
While he who was superior in the sin,
Is unrebuked, where'er he chance to go,
Save by a warning whisper from within.

But to return to Ned who far away,
Is taking pleasure with his city friends.
Weeks grow to months, and he again is gay,
For every day some new enjoyment lends.

But 'mid these scenes of ever shifting light,
A letter fills him with unusual care.
His little sister who has been so bright
Is very sick and he must hasten there.

He meets the doctor as he nears the door,
And stopping, asks him of his sister's health,
"Tis hard to say just what you have in store,
Yet she is happy in approaching wealth."

Reaching the house he hastens to her room,
And kneeling down beside her little bed,
Then yielding to the all prevailing gloom,
Bursts into tears, and hides his aching head.

A little arm entwines about his neck,
A loving voice whispers, "Ned, do not cry."
His force of will is summoned, tears to check,
And he at length can raise a tearless eye.

“I’m glad you’ve come, I did so long for you,
And then I feared you would not come in time.
I know you love your sister. Is it true?
Then you are glad I near a fairer clime.”

“Yes, I am glad for you, but we who stay,
How can we do without your darling face?
How can we live when you are gone away?
How can we look upon your vacant place?”

“Don’t think of that;—you too, will follow me,
It won’t be long ere we shall meet again,
All happy there beside the crystal sea.
Ned, promise me, I hope this not in vain.”

“Oh, sister, if I could I would indeed;
And I will try for your sake, sister dear;
And well I know that this is what I need;
But I could do it better with you here.”

“Then do it now, why wait till I am gone;
Jesus is pleading now, just let him in;
His presence in the heart is like the dawn;
The day is there where we are free from sin.”

“Well, let me think. I cannot tell you now.
’Tis well for one to ponder in the mind,
Before he enters in a solemn vow
To leave the pleasures of the world behind.

“But you are weary. You must rest a while,—
I’ll talk with you of this another day.
Your face is always sweetened by a smile,
So let me sit, and watch it while I may.”

The lovely face was fairer yet in sleep,
The breath grew lighter as the moments sped.
They watched the sleeper ’mid the silence deep,
And ere they knew, they watched above the dead.

At last the mother, bending o’er her form,
Listened to hear the faintest sound of breath,
Then touched the brow with fever lately warm,
And recognized the dreaded monster, Death.

I need not picture, for you all have seen,
The darkened room, the mother’s tear-stained face,
The disappointed father’s downcast mien,
The gentle steps of all who near the place.

The time has come when they must put away
All that remains of one they loved so much.
The sky itself is clad in sober gray,
As though to add the last funereal touch.

Ned sees the coffin lowered in the ground,
He hears the rattle of the falling sod,
He shudders as he listens to the sound,
Then turns to seek the path which once they trod

Together, in the sweet, prophetic spring,
Seeking for flowers and the wintergreen,
Making the woods with youthful laughter ring,
And drinking beauty from the forest scene.

How false the prophecies of spring had been.
The fairest songster of them all had flown.
The leaves o'erhead, already getting thin,
But made him feel more sad and more alone.

Yet had, indeed, those prophecies deceived?
Had they been false, or had they been fulfilled?
Had not the reaper harvests rich received?
Had not the chestnut ripened ere 'twas chilled?

And had not virtue yielded fruits of love,
Beneath the peaceful summer's gentle breath?
And had not harvests been stored up above,
And sin brought forth its lawful fruitage, death?

The trouble was, he had not read aright
The promise which the springtime had displayed.
For while he saw the letters bold and bright
He did not note the finer, deeper shade.

'Tis often so; we look at the outside
And do not think what may be wrapped within.
We watch the ship upon the restless tide,
Forgetful of the shipyard's busy din.

We are too shallow in our deepest thought,
Too ready to decide, too quick to speak.
We fail to find the things for which we sought,
Because we have not patience long to seek.

A few days later, in the early morn,
Ned wandered sadly through the lonely wood
Thinking the wretched thoughts of bitter scorn,
Which would intrude as often as they could.

At length he came to where the river led
Peaceful and deep ; here bending slowly round,
It seemed to sleep within its sandy bed,
In sweet repose unbroken by a sound.

He followed it to where the rapids were,
And lying down, looked in the plunging stream.
There sat the trapper, and without a stir
He looked away, as in a waking dream ;

And just above the water's frothy brim
Washed by its spray appeared a lovely face
Fairer than life, for, as it seemed to him,
The monster, Death, had only added grace.

The water tossed the wavy, auburn hair ;
One hand was folded lightly o'er her breast ;
Never, indeed, had she been half so fair,
It seemed as though she had lain down to rest.

At length the father rose up from the stone,
And drew her out upon the narrow sand,
Then, looking up, saw he was not alone,
And aimed his rifle with a trembling hand.

“Be gone, you villain! ere you get your due.
Away, away! and yet await my curse,
You smoothly promised her love ever true,
You told her of your farm and of your purse.

“You won to humble, humbled to desert.
I would not spare you but that through your life
Body and mind may vie to do you hurt,
And you may be more wretched for the strife.

“And may she haunt you even in your sleep,
Crying for vengeance on your guilty head;
And may she rouse you from your slumber deep,
Filling your heart with agony and dread,

“And may you harvest by your sacred hearth
What you have sown deceitfully at mine;
May jealousy and hate destroy your mirth;
May adders’ faces mock you from the wine.

“I ask no more;—if all these be fulfilled,
Your life will be a doubly scorching hell
Replete with torment never to be stilled,
As bad as Satan’s most degraded cell.”

He dropped his gun, and fell upon the sand,
"My daughter! O my daughter, are you dead?
Will you not raise again your lily hand,
Or sweetly tell some story which you read?"

Ned turned away; more bitter was his heart;
The arrow sticking fast, took root and grew.
He felt the myriad rootlets from the dart,
Piercing his mind and body, through and through.

He could not cast it out; it was a load
Which he must bear through all his weary days.
Now coming to a rough, untrodden road,
He follows it, and yet ere long, delays.

"What shall I do? I cannot stand it here,
Each tree would whisper of deserted love,
Each shadow fill my trembling heart with fear,
Reproaches sound from every cooing dove.

"The city is the only place for me.
And thither will I go and there I'll stay.
'Mid hurry and excitement, I may be
Free from the thoughts of this unhappy day.

"No one will know there what has happened here,
Nor would it matter if they chanced to know.
'Twould be but spice above a cup of beer;—
I have resolved, I'll pack my things and go."

His parents said he should not leave so soon ;
And so one night, when they were safe in bed,
He packed his things, and 'neath the silver moon,
Pursued the way which to the city led.

The father sorrowed for his wayward son ;
He found his home was lonesome, winter nights.
He sought the inn, and mingled with the fun,
And soon became one of its brightest lights.

What followed this, there is no need to tell,
Save that a year had hardly passed away,
Ere house and farm he advertised to sell,
And then went mad upon the auction day.

Another year rolled on its dreary round,
Filled up with fancies, sorrows and with fears;
And now another grave you might have found
Beside the one where once he knelt with tears.

And yet there was a little money left
With which his wife could buy herself a home,
And though she was of all her friends bereft,
She hoped that Ned would some time cease to roam.

But time moved on, and he did not return.
She often wept, and often prayed for him,
When early dew adorned the tender fern,
And fading light played with the shadows dim.

IV.

VISIONS OF THE NIGHT.

In the wood the winds are sighing,
For the dying summer crying,
And the birds are southward flying
To the far off sunny land.

But, although among the many
Some are hardly worth a penny,
Not unnoticed falleth any
Of the merry, merry band.

For the God of heaven keepeth
That which flieth, that which creepeth,
And He holdeth him that weepeth
In the hollow of His hand.

There the humble resteth gladly,
But the proud one rageth madly,
Till his Maker, slowly, sadly
Casts him out upon the sand.

Yet whene'er, his folly spurning,
'To his loving Master turning,
And with meekness gladly learning,
He obeyeth God's command,

All his heart is filled with gladness,
Banished are his care and sadness,
And his mind, in place of madness,
Filled with hopes and motives grand.

The city clock tolled out the midnight stroke,
Ned tossed uneasily upon his bed,
Another hour labored beneath the yoke
Until its sixty minutes all were dead,

Each having breathed its sixty seconds out,
Each second plunging some one in the tide
Of their eternity. He stared about;
To him each second seemed to slowly glide

Through all the winding measure of a year;
Each moment seemed an age. The crescent shone
Through tattered curtains in the windows near,
And painted pictures meant for him alone.

The heated air, indeed, prevents his sleep.
His head grows dizzy with the weight of care.
Amid the shades prophetic fancies creep,
He sees the future pictured in the air.

It comes in varied scenes before his eyes,
Discovery, the certain work of time;
The trusting master's look of sad surprise;
The harsh remarks of clerks about the crime;

The jests of ladies, or the careless look
Of strangers who might hear the common tale
Of one who coveted, and shortly took
Wherewith to win, yet fated was to fail.

Then follows the arrest; they lead away
To justice, while within, his sinking heart
In shame is writhing. Now he dreads delay,
And then, rebellious, plays a hopeless part.

And now he seems to see his mother's face,
Again lit with the peaceful, trusting look
Which long ago had added grace to grace
At evening, as she read the sacred book.

Now as she sits, the Bible on her lap,
A neighbor enters with unwelcome news.
She sets a chair, and taking off his cap,
He asks if she has all she needs to use;

And she replies, "The Lord is very good.
I am with all things needful well supplied.
I can't complain, nor would I if I could.
The Lord is good. I trust he will provide."

He takes a paper, and an item reads.
The short untempered story of the fall.
"My Ned! my boy, how could you do such deeds?
Yet God is good. He rules and conquers all."

The picture is too much for him to bear.
These fancies wild of his disordered brain
Sting him like nettles, and his load of care
Is weighing down; he fights it all in vain.

He springs from bed and draws his clothing on,
And hat in hand steals down the winding stairs.
The street is reached, yet he forgets to don
His hat, he is so cumbered with his cares.

Where he is going he could hardly say,
Nor why he steps so gently does he know,
For none would notice him upon the way;
No thought of him would ever sink below

The shallow surface of the passer's mind.
A dreaded officer comes down the street,
Swinging his club, and doubtless like his kind,
Counting the hours which he must walk his beat,

And calculating just what part to spend
With safety in some loathsome drinking den,
While even now his duty is, to end
The sale of liquor, and turn out the men.

Nor does he see, as he is passing by,
A crouching figure by the dusky wall;
And Ned goes on with an unheeded sigh,
While gathered shadows cover like a pall.

The air is cool; it soothes his aching brow.
His thoughts are clearer. What can that avail
For one who flees from sin's reward, and how
Can they return the money spent for ale,

Or lost at cards, the money not his own,
But pilfered from that which he held in trust?
And for all this he gladly would atone,
Could he but do it by a dagger's thrust,

Although his blood pursued the guilty blade.
His thoughts retrace the reckless path of life
To when in youth his plans of life were laid;
And could he now retry the doubtful strife

He would be victor, so at least he thinks.
That youthful innocence so sweet and fair,
Is gone forever, and he sadly sinks
Beneath the torrent of a deep despair.

The trapper's curse rests heavy on his head.
It broods above his mind, and hatches thought.
A wild desire to be among the dead
Rushes upon him, and his fancy, caught,

Urges him on to do the dreadful deed.
It lyingly portrays a scene of rest,
As though that spirit of avenging greed
Would ever take its talons from his breast.

Standing upon the bridge he looks below ;
A heavy fog has risen o'er the stream ;
It hides the water with its quiet flow.
Ned wildly gazes, seeming but to dream.

There is the gate of exit from his care,
The hiding place from law's avenging arm,
His shame and sin would all be ended there,
His mind be free forever from alarm.

Yet shall he do it? Shall he give up so?
Shall he admit he is not fit to live?
Shall he proclaim that he has sunk so low
That neither man nor God could now forgive?

It is the trial moment for him now,
Time and eternity are to be weighed,
Perhaps outweighed ; and do you wonder how?
Against them shame is in the balance laid.

'Tis light indeed, but it so clouds the eye,
He may mistake the reading of the scale ;
The truth is often hidden by a lie.
A barren sandhill hides a lovely dale.

So death seems sweeter to the maddened brain
Than life with all its chances for reform.
The ship is drifting, struggle seems in vain ;
By sinking her you may escape the storm.

The trapper's curse is ringing in his ear.
"I will escape one-half the double hell,"
He said, "although the other half I fear
May follow me, and scorch me there as well."

He climbs the railing, but before his eyes,
Amid the mists which float about him now,
He sees a form which fills him with surprise.
"You see the depths to which a broken vow

"May sink the man who trifles with a heart.
You feel at length as I did years ago;
Yet thrice as bitter is the fatal dart,
When it rebounds to lay the archer low.

"But you, a man, should surely be above
A mad man's folly and a coward's fate,
Although a maiden cheated in her love,
Despairing, died when love was met by hate.

"If you have sinned, the world will pass it by,
And you may yet be high in its esteem.
For me no fate was lighter than to die,
For fallen woman has no shining beam.

"But you should live, and conquer in the fight.
The world is large, it has a place for you.
Reject the wrong, and try to do the right,
Disdain deceit, be wholly just and true."

The form is gone, and wonder fills his mind.
Can he return, regain the honored place,
The manhood which he madly left behind?
And would he dare the scornful world to face?

Another image rises to his view.
His sister seems to stand amid the mist.
"Brother, a promise I have brought for you,
If you will to my words a moment list.

"Cast out this crew of wild, rebellious deeds,
Repair the ship now broken by the wave,
Trust to the Pilot who in safety leads,
And you may yet the damaged cargo save.

"Go and confess your crime, you need not fear,
For others know your weakness by their own;
Repentance finds forgiveness ever near,
But do not walk the slippery path alone.

"Go back to mother, and with her remain.
She needs a son in her declining years,
And you may be a joy to her again
Though you have been to her a cause of tears."

And as the fancy faded from his thought,
He turned his mind upon the distant day,
When she in vain so lovingly had sought
To guide him to the straight and narrow way.

"I will go back," at length he slowly said.
"I will confess the thing which I have done.
Perhaps I may retrace the path I led;
The morning waiteth for the setting sun."

And as he turned, the glimmer of the morn
Broke on the city and upon his soul,
Not that he saw it; he was too forlorn,
Too much beneath a dark despair's control.

And yet the angels sang aloud that day
A song of triumph o'er a vanquished foe,
And o'er a sinner turning from his way,
The backward leafage now begins to grow.

A blighted plant casts off the foul disease,
And sprouts again spring from the barren limb;
The reed that bended in the summer breeze
Begins to straighten slowly, for 'tis slim.

Within his room he struggles with his fear
Until the city rouses from its sleep.
The sounds of labor come from far and near,
The shadows to their hiding places creep,

And then he goes and fully tells his guilt.
He gets forgiveness, though he asks it not.
His master says, "Cry not for milk that's spilt.
Begin again, and wipe away the blot.

A country village, such as most have seen,
A church, a store, a tavern, only one,
Each house surrounded by a patch of green,
Is scorching 'neath the summer's mid-day sun.

Here is a cottage very neatly kept;
A climbing vine festoons the little porch;
Beneath its leaves a dewdrop might have slept
Safe from the arrow hurled from heaven's arch.

The doors and windows both are open wide;
The inmate is a lady. There she sits
Watching the shadows as they quickly glide,
Thinking and praying ever while she knits.

For now her eyes are dim and passers seem
To her as shadows, yet she hopes that one
May sometime come who will not be a dream
Or moving phantom, but her darling son.

Her face is sweet with patience's mild impress;
Her hair is silvered, though it once was black;
And time has touched her with a soft caress,
Nor does her face its former beauty lack.

The wrinkles may be deeper than they were,
Yet they but emphasize the look of trust
Which says so plainly, all is well with her,
She would not grumble, had she but a crust.

A weary stranger, coming down the road,
A moment stops before the widow's gate,
Then opens it, and enters her abode,
A welcome guest; no need for him to wait.

Imagine now the scene—the open door—
The mother clasps her son returned at last,
Then, not ungrateful, kneels upon the floor,
And thanks her God for all His mercies past;

And Edward joins, the first time in his life,
In prayers and thanks to Him Who reigns above;
In prayers to help him in his earthly strife,
And thanks for all His mercy and His love.

As time went on he gained an honored place,
They made him deacon of the village church,
Yet lines of care were stamped upon his face
So plainly that there was no need to search,

You might detect them even with a glance,
But why do shadows mar the deacon's peace
Like minor strains of music at a dance
Which thrill the captive, yet will not release?

No! time and pardon can not take away
The thoughts of wrong which he, alas, has done,
Nor make it less a wrong. The winter day
Cannot be heated by the summer sun.

If eastward moving, day shall chase the night,
Then pardon may consume the fruit of sin.
If earth shall give its captives back to sight,
Then all may be as though it had not been.

Till time moves backward in its steady course,
We may not hope that pardon will erase
The law of nature, whose gigantic force
We see displayed in every time and place.

Pardon may cover up the stain of guilt,
It may new robes of dazzling white unfold;
It cannot save the blood which once is spilt,
It cannot mend the robes already old.

WHEN FANCY LED.

The days in sweet enchantment passed,
The nights in dreamy pleasure fled,
Forgetful that time cannot last,
But endeth soon, when fancy led.

When fancy led, the present seemed
A sleep from which I soon would wake,
A night in which I only dreamed
Of what might be, when morn should break.

The past seemed half an idle tale
Not worth the second, sober thought,
Half prophecies, which never fail,
With some mysterious meaning fraught.

The future seemed a fairy life,
With friends more true and love more deep,
Than ere were known 'mid earthly strife;
It had no shades, no time to weep.

When fancy led, each blossom seemed
To speak of some sweet smiling face;
And flashing eyes from dewdrops gleamed;
And beauty decked the world with grace.

When fancy led, the brooklets sang
Of dainty feet which they had laved;
The wood with gayer music rang;
'Neath gentler breeze the wheat-field waved.

When fancy led, each hill and dell,
Decked in its tapestry of green,
Seemed but the home where fairies dwell,
Contented in a life serene.

The clouds displayed a brighter hue,
The sun gave forth a milder light,
And heart to heart was ever true,
And hope was not so dull of sight.

'Twas sweet to live, 'twas sad to die,
'Twas paradise for heart and head,
'Twas joy unmixed with earthly sigh,
To think and hope, when fancy led.

TO A FRIEND.

Friend, I saw the waves of anger
Rolling fiercely o'er thy soul,
And I feared that deep within thee,
Evil wrestled for control.

I perceived the turbid billows,
Dashing madly in thy face,
Shutting out the light of conscience
And the loving Saviour's grace.

Yes, I know the fearful conflict
That can rage within the breast,
For I've felt its torrents swelling
Madly in a wild unrest.

But there came a change within thee,
Darkness seemed to turn to light,
And I knew the hidden secret
Was the humble Saviour's might.

For the stormy winds and waters
Will obey his mandate still,
And the warmth of his forgiveness
Takes away their icy chill.

And I felt you were the victor
In a conflict greater far,
Than the one who takes a city,
And is drawn in golden car.

And I know you would not barter,
That which you have gained to-day,
For the prickly fruits of vengeance
Growing 'mid the shadows gray.

Others may misjudge the meaning
Of a meek forgiving mind,
But the Saviour looketh deeper
Every secret thought to find.

WHY COMPLAIN?

Oh, why are we always complaining
Of trouble and sorrow and care?
The world was but meant as a training
For one that is happy and fair.

Its gold and its glitter and splendor
Cannot take away from the heart
The passions and longings which render
It lonely and sad from the start.

But know that the pleasure we covet,
Might ruin the life of the soul;
And think there is something above it,
Our actions and life to control.

The longings and promptings of nature
Seek something more stable than gold.
The richest may bear on his feature
Dark shadows of sorrows untold.

The feelings of pleasure and pity,
Which brighten the humble abode,
Oft die in the hall of the city,
Where wealth has been freely bestowed.

For light and the water descending
From heaven each mortal to bless,
And health on our comfort attending,
High praises we ought to address.

Let's banish this useless complaining,
Which only makes trouble more deep;
Some pleasures are always remaining
To those who are willing to reap.

A PICTURE OF THE PAST.

O pray, paint a picture to-night, artist,
Will you paint a picture to-night?
I will tell you what I would have you paint,
Be sure to do it right.

There are woods of hemlock and birch, artist,
With foliage such as you've seen,
For the summer's sun with a magic hand
Has decked them all in green.

But the fairest part of the scene, artist,
Is a beautiful maiden's form,
As she wanders beneath the leafy shade
When summer days are warm.

She has eyes that sparkle and flash, artist,
In a way to conquer one's heart,
And the pretty glow on her rosy cheek
Is not a work of art.

She has lips that would tempt a kiss, artist,
Could you see her as I have seen,
But the lips and the pretty youthful form
Now rest beneath the green.

Do you wonder that I am sad, artist,
As I think of the days gone by,
And the hopes and fancies of childhood,
Which dead about me lie.

I have friends as true as the old time friends,
Nor has life grown weary so soon,
But the fairest of all the morning flowers
Has withered ere 'tis noon.

There are thoughts too deep to express, artist,
But if I were a painter true,
And could wield a brush with an artist's skill,
I then would paint for you.

DESPAIR.

Oh this world is dark and weary !
There is naught in it to love ;
It is always cold and dreary,
Has no sunshine from above.

Stormy winds and tempests roaring,
Leave no spot of earth at rest.
Mighty torrents wildly pouring,
Toss the foam upon their crest.

Friends, alas, though it may grieve you,
Will betray in time of need ;
Do not let their smiles deceive you ;
And their praises, do not heed.

Like the day-dream ever lying,
Still receding from our grasp,
Life is swiftly from us flying
To go out in death at last.

Let me flee this world of sorrow,
And escape its care and woe.
Darker clouds will rise to-morrow,
Worse afflictions lay me low.

HOPE'S ANSWER TO DESPAIR.

No, this world is gay and cheery,
Full of all things fit to love,
Night and quiet for the weary,
Warmth and sunshine from above.

Mild and soft the breezes stirring,
In the summer or the spring;
And wild torrents wildly whirring,
Make a thousand spindles sing.

Friends! Yes, if you are but friendly;
If you love, you will have love;
If no other treats you kindly,
There is One who will, above.

Life is like the fragrant flower
Filled with sweetness all its days;
Open to the sun or shower,
And with brightness all ablaze.

Let me gain life's rarest treasure,
And enjoy it as I go,
Fill this day with sweetest pleasure,
Make a friend of every foe.

THE SUNLIGHT.

The sunlight comes down
From its throne in the sky,
To bring earth a crown,
Which it snatched from on high.

The crown is of gold,
Set with jewels so bright,
That beauties untold
Often flash on our sight.

Each bud is a gem
In this crown of the earth.
Each leaf on its stem
Adds its portion of worth.

The sunlight descends
Like a God from above,
And on us attends
With infinite love.

It paints on the sky
All the pictures so bright,
Which gladden the eye
At morn or at night.

It gives us new life,
When our sad faces turn
From earth's weary strife
To the brook or the fern.

It gives us new strength,
When we wake with the day;
And fills us at length
With hope's life-giving ray.

SYMPATHY.

What can reach the heart of mortals,
Like the accents of a friend
When the tender thoughts within him
With his fond expressions blend?

What can calm the troubled spirit,
Like the sympathizing tear,
Telling that your bitter sorrow
To another heart is near?

How the ills of life grow little
'Neath the sunshine and the rain
Of his true and friendly feeling,
Shown in times of grief or pain.

WHAT IS EXISTENCE?

To what shall I liken existence,
A shadow that flits o'er the lea,
Or water, that lacking resistance,
Flows onward to plunge in the sea?

I'll call it a day with its morning
Ablaze with that coloring bright,
Which youth, never heeding a warning,
Beholds with exquisite delight;

Its noon, that may shine with a splendor
As bright as the solstitial sun,
Or hide 'mid the shadows that render
It gloomy before it is done;

Its evening, when sunshine and shower
Combining may stretch through the sky
That symbol, a God-given dower
To those who are looking on high;

Its night, when the body shall slumber
Where hyacinths bloom in the dale,
And the spirit abide with the number
Of those who have passed through the vale.

TIME'S STREAM.

We are drifting, swiftly drifting
Down the current of time's stream,
All the scenes around us shifting,
Like wild fancies in a dream.

Friends once cherished, long have left us,
We shall never see them more.
Time, alas, too soon, bereft us ;
We have left them on the shore.

Seated there beneath the cherry,
In the evening air so mild,
To my mind their faces hurry,
As I saw them when a child.

All along the shore they're resting
'Neath the willow or the sod,
Sin no more their hearts molesting,
Wearies of the path they trod.

Day by day new faces meeting,
Forming friendships but to break ;
Hour by hour my pulse's beating
Tells me that we near the lake.

Thus the scenes about us ever
Change like some fantastic dream,
For we're floating down the river,
On time's rough and restless stream.

TRUE PLEASURE.

Every thing which gives us pleasure,
All we count our richest treasure,
Health and beauty, peace and joy,
Comes to none without alloy.

For the same sun showers splendor
On the prince and on the vender,
And the same clouds cast their shadows
On the mountains and the meadows.

Here's the secret of enjoyment,
Always be in good employment;
Always say without repining,
"Each cloud has a silver lining."

Vain, indeed, is worldly pleasure,
If we gain no heavenly treasure.
He who trusts this world for joy
Finds in trouble no alloy.

THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE.

A thousand questions urge the soul
To seek a draught from wisdom's bowl;
And where to find that sacred cup
Is the first question turning up.

Some seek it in the starry sky,
And night and day turn thoughts on high.
Some, delving in the earth below,
Its closest secrets try to show.

Some, in the wood, or on the plain,
In earnest seek, and not in vain.
Some, 'mid the icy northern seas,
Drink from the bowl by slow degrees.

Some, 'neath the sun's most scorching ray,
Find living wells beside the way;
But cooler, sweeter is their flow
Where spring and autumn lend a glow.

In short, where'er a man may be,
Some hints of wisdom he can see;
But each taste from the sparkling cup
Makes him desire a deeper sup.

CORRESPONDENCE.

“Yes, if you wish it.” Well I do,
And why I wish, I’ll tell you too.
In passing through the world, you know,
We meet with pleasure and with woe.

But pleasure loses half its taste,
Enjoyed alone, and goes to waste,
And sorrow’s load is hard to bear
Without a friend its weight to share;

And when once put in black and white,
Our pleasures shine with greater light;
But sorrows seem to shrink away,
As shadows flee before the day.

The constant interchange of thought
Is like a chain, which, firmly wrought,
Binds friend to friend, and safe and fast,
Holds them together to the last.

But let this chain once break apart,
Heart separates itself from heart,
And those once joined by such a tie,
As strangers live, as strangers die.

IN THE FOREST.

'Tis the fair, prophetic spring-time,
And I sit beneath a tree;
And I watch a little brooklet
Flow along with bounding glee;

And I wonder at the brightness
Of the flowers growing near,
And the merry, merry music
Which I love so well to hear.

Truly, all the world seems fitted
For a gay and happy life;
Yet how many sadly find it
But a place of care and strife.

There is beauty all around us;
Yet how many never see
How the Lord hath clothed the meadow,
And adorned the forest tree.

Oft the air is gay with music;
Yet how seldom does the heart
Feel that sweet, enchanting gladness,
Thrilling to its inmost part.

Here, beneath the arching branches,
Is a bud of beauty rare;
Yet how many on beholding,
Would but heave a sigh of care.

Yes, we seem to see within it
Something which we might have been,
But for human faults and failings,
Nay, I should say, human sin.

Life seems strangely out of keeping
With the great Creator's plan;
With the music and the beauty
Which He has prepared for man.

So that, what should give us pleasure,
Only makes us feel more sad,
And the fairest of surroundings
Cannot make our spirits glad.

Yet we know that God has promised
To restore our lost estate,
If we will but trust His mercy,
And upon His service wait.

And we know that in the future,
Beauty will not hint of sin,
Music have no strain of sadness,
Love bring naught but peace within.

SLEEP.

Hush, the baby is asleep.
O'er its life so pure and tender,
And its frame so young and slender,
May the shadows never creep.
May he ne'er forget to render
Proper service to the sender
Of his slumber, calm and deep.

Look, the sunbeam is at play
With the face upon the pillow,
With the ringlets on the pillow.
Sleep of childhood brings a day
Free from care as is the swallow;
Would that sin might never lay low,
Youth and beauty ever stay.

When to manhood quickly grown,
While the shadows dim are creeping
O'er the children gently sleeping,
Rest to him is all unknown.
Often, while the stars are keeping
Watch upon this land of weeping,
He is weary, sad and lone.

When the locks have changed to white,
And is lost the piercing vision,
Truly slumber, in derision,
Comes to him but brief and light.
All the functions lack precision,
Even thoughts get in collision,
And he longs for morning light.

As the shadows chase the day,
Checked with clouds or ever sunny,
Filled with actions harsh or funny,
Dull with care, or ever gay,
So without regard for money,
Robbing life's last drop of honey,
Slumber ends the earthly way.

WHERE FANCY LED.

As I crossed a swollen river,
Looking in the turbid stream,
Thoughts came to my wand'ring fancy,
Yet they were no idle dream.

As I watched the struggling water,
Every silver-crested wave,
To my weary, restless spirit,
Sympathetic feeling gave;

For there seemed a striking likeness,
In the torrent's wild unrest,
To the fierce tumultuous conflict
That was raging in my breast.

No one saw the rugged boulders
Over which the water tossed;
No one knew the rocky barrier,
Which my spirit's freedom crossed.

As the water in its madness
Broke upon the jagged rock,
So my spirit in its struggle,
Ill sustained the fearful shock.

Yet alike, they were not conquered;
But went dashing on their way,
Seeming gay amid their torture,
Hoping for a better day.

Lifting up their troubled voices
To the One who rules supreme,
That a safe, untroubled channel
May be found for mind and stream.

Thus did Fancy lead me onward
To a future bright with hopes,
Where my spirit yet may issue
From the clouds 'mid which it gropes.

WE ARE HURRYING ON.

Hurrying on, we know not where,
Hurrying on, we scarcely care;
Hurrying on to a distant day;
Hurrying on to the far away;

On to a life whose years, perhaps,
Filled with sadness, may slowly lapse;
On to a time when we may sigh
Vainly again for years gone by;

Hurrying on through present time,
Childhood and youth and manhood's prime,
Wishing the bark would swiftly glide
Over the silvery, laughing tide;

Hurrying on, perhaps, to sin,
Passion and crime, which death begin;
Out of the light of the happy now,
Into the dark of a future slough;

Hurrying on from present friends,
Caring not for the deed that rends
Loving hearts from the hopes of youth,
Putting a lie in the place of truth;

Hurrying on, as we ever hope,
Out of the darkness in which we grope,
Into the light of a brighter day,
Breaking at last through the shadows gray;

Hurrying on to friendships new,
Binding our hearts to others true;
Hurrying on to the joys of life;
Hurrying off from the field of strife;

Hurrying on, we know not where,
Yet, as we hope, to a mansion fair;
Over the river, the bound of time,
Into a home in a fairer clime;

Hurrying on, we know full well,
Into the bounds of a narrow cell,
Into the distant spirit land;
Into the unknown vast and grand.

HEAVEN.

The poet's dream of Heaven,
I try to picture now.
One sat beside the table,
A cloud was on his brow.

Then gently, 'mid his musings,
A thought of Heaven stole;
The clouds were quickly banished,
And joy entranced his soul.

He looked into the future,
And saw the Heav'n of rest,
The home of sin-sick mortals,
The mansions for the blest.

He heard the strains of music
Fall softly on the air,
As angels chanted praises
Amid those mansions fair.

But all his joy seemed fullest,
When to him came the view
Of his own loving Saviour,
The Friend to him most true.

'Tis ever so in musing,
The vision gains new grace,
When Heaven means communion
With Jesus, face to face.

LOVE.

Why this tumult in the bosom?
Why the spirit's waking dream,
Which would fain lead out of darkness
To a future's brighter gleam?

Love, it is, which tunes the heart-strings
To a harmony divine,
Making earth's most prosy landscape
Poetry in every line.

But when love plays on the heart-strings,
And no kindred notes reply,
All the music turns to sadness,
And the song becomes a cry.

Love, the sweetest, fairest flower
In the garden of the soul,
When once planted, lives forever,
Growing as the ages roll.

Think not, it may be transplanted,
For its fibers firmly bind;
If you snatch it from the bosom,
You will leave no heart behind.

Sweet its fruit when rightly nourished
Till the harvest-time arrives;
But most bitter when neglected,
Though the stunted plant survives.

Trifle not with this fair blossom,
Which a God of love has giv'n,
Lest, in future retribution,
Thy sad heart with grief be riv'n.

Care for that which God hath planted,
And thy life shall happy be,
For in love, all times and chances
In one harmony agree.

A QUESTION.

In the west, the sun is setting,
And the air is soft and still;
But within, my heart is fretting,
Like a noisy little rill.

In the trees, the birds are singing;
What a merry, merry band.
In my ears, a voice is ringing
From a loved but distant land.

Softly now, the words are falling,
"Going into all the world,
Sinners to repentance calling,
Let my banner be unfurled."

Life is short, and time is fleeting
See the moments, how they fly;
Soon my heart will cease its beating,
Soon this feeble body die.

Shall I do as he is saying?
Shall I give my little all?
Not to please myself delaying,
Shall I heed the loving call?

O my Saviour, make me willing
To obey thy parting word,
All my life thy Spirit filling,
May thy voice be ever heard.

Sweeter pleasures come from giving
Than for keeping for my own;
Life were scarcely worth the living,
If I lived for self alone.

Still my life is onward flowing,
While I think, it moves apace.
Saviour grant I may be growing
Richer in thy love and grace.

THE FIELD.

They tell me, that over the ocean,
There are lands far, far away ;
And it fills my heart with emotion,
As I list to what they say.

They tell of the beauty which nature
Has scattered with lavish hand ;
And it seems as though every creature
Would be happy in that land.

But great is the cause of their sighing ;
Three-fourths of the human race,
In bondage to Satan are lying,
Knowing not of God's free grace.

Just think what a fearful condition ;
No Saviour to pardon sin ;
No matter how great their contrition,
No comfort or peace within.

One-third of the sisters and brothers,
Who open their eyes to the light,
See the faces of Chinese mothers,
And die, as they live, in the night.

Shall we, when they ask for salvation,
Give only our mites for the cause,
And save for ourselves or our nation,
The dollars that win us applause?

A few hundred men, to these millions,
We send with the word of life,
Yet ere all have heard from them, billions
Will fall 'neath Time's busy knife.

If we are so selfish and greedy,
Will not God bring to account,
And grant to us, who are so needy,
Of blessings, a small amount?

MY VOW.

Jesus my guide, I trust Thy hand,
To lead me through the shady way,
Into the fair and sunny land,
Into the bright, eternal day.

I wrestled hard with self and sin;
I sought to break the tempter's power;
Tempests of passion raged within,
And smote my soul from hour to hour.

I turned and gave myself to Thee ;
I promised to obey Thy will ;
I asked that Thou wouldst rescue me
From every dark, foreboding ill.

I felt the peace which Thou dost give,
A soothing balm to wounded heart ;
I promised Thee henceforth to live
Holy to Thee in every part.

But soon the tempter came again
To vex the soul which he had lost,
And proud, I struggled on, in vain,
To breast the waves which madly tossed ;

Then sinking, cried to Thee for aid ;
Thy hand did still the foaming wave,
And safely in Thy bosom laid
The wand'rer rescued from the grave.

Again I tried to walk alone,
For I seemed strong when close to Thee ;
Yet soon again was forced to own,
No power but Thine could keep me free.

It seemed, sometimes, as though within
A very demon held control,
And through the hateful power of sin
Kept out Thy presence from my soul.

So through the years went on the storm,
Christ saving from each crested wave
That, bearing down my trembling form,
Threatened to plunge me in the grave.

How dark and deep these currents flow,
No one but God could ever tell,
And none could e'er the reason know
That shadows often on me dwell.

Point after point as life advanced
Was gained through Thy sufficient aid;
Yet ever, some new bubble danced
To lure the soul o'er sunny glade.

I promised Thee, to give up all
The pleasures of a worldly life,
And go where'er Thy voice might call
To carry on Thy holy strife.

I promised all, yet asked of Thee,
That one sweet pleasure might remain;
But Thou didst seem to say to me,
"Give all, or else the gift is vain."

I thought there was no need to give
This one best pleasure which I craved;
It would be easier to live
A holy life, if this were saved.

I knelt, and begged before Thy throne,
That Thou wouldst grant this one request,
And yet, I seemed to be alone;
I did not feel the sacred rest;

The rest, which ought to follow prayer,
The rest from leaning on Thy arm
With confidence that in Thy care
The soul is safe from all alarm.

For when I said, "Thy will be done,"
My heart with mute rebellion swelled,
Lest Thou shouldst will for me the one
Thing which I thought most sorrow held.

But Thou hast taught my stubborn heart
To give its dearest treasure up,
And in life's battle take its part,
And bear for time a bitter cup.

And Thou hast taught my will to say,
"My gracious Lord, I yield to Thee,
No more, my course shall pleasure stay,
I do Thy will whate'er it be."

And I can trust Thee to provide
The richest blessings for my soul,
And in Thy loving bosom hide
Me safe from every sin's control.

Yes, I can bear this bitter cup,
Can look upon it calmly now,
And if Thou wilt that I should sup,
Can drink, and keep my solemn vow;

For I have vowed that I would place
Each fondest treasure in Thy hand,
And take whatever, through Thy grace,
Is given by supreme command.

Now precious Saviour, dearest Friend,
Help me to keep this solemn vow,
And even to my journey's end,
Sigh not for what I give up now.

And shouldst Thou even yet return
Those joys which I so much desire,
My love for Thee will no less burn,
But blaze up yet, a holier fire.

TURNING FROM SELF TO JESUS.

Sadly, ah sadly, I thought of my soul,
Fearing its ruin beyond all control,
Feeling, whatever my purpose might be,
Nothing within me could ever save me.

Gently a whisper stole into my ear,
Telling that Jesus was ready and near,
Seeking to save me from sins dark and deep,
Longing forever my spirit to keep.

Then I looked up from the darkness within,
Up from that picture of sorrow and sin,
Into a face that was lovely and fair,
Holy and peaceful beyond all compare.

Jesus, my Saviour, my Saviour, I cried,
Take from my being this folly and pride,
All that within me is wicked and low,
Then for this rubbish, Thy treasure bestow.

"Go, give thy life to my service," He said,
"Walk in the footsteps where first I have led ;
Tell all the world how its Saviour was slain
That full salvation it might thus obtain."

Then I looked down on my weakness and said,
"I am not fit for the path which He led,
Sinners would laugh at me, Christians would scorn,
Thus, in His vineyard, I'd prove but a thorn."

Then to my mind came the promise again,
"Grace is sufficient;" my duty was plain,
Christ is my refuge, my strength and my share ;
I will obey Him, and trust to His care.

A PRAYER.

Saviour, list to my humble call,
Now I am looking to Thee;
Grant me pardon from sin's deep fall,
While I am praying to Thee;
Teach me how to trust Thee;
Teach me how to love Thee;
Rescue my soul, rescue my soul,
While I am calling on Thee.

Saviour help me to hear Thy word,
While Thou art calling to me;
Swift to Thy arms like a frightened bird,
Grant that my soul may flee;
O how Thou hast loved me,
Given all to save me;
Teach me Thy word, teach me Thy word;
Jesus, teach even me.

Saviour look to my every need,
Now I am trusting to Thee;
Help to keep me from sin's dark deed,
For I am clinging to Thee;
May I ever love Thee;
May I ever praise Thee,
For all I read, for all I read,
Jesus, my Saviour, of Thee.

SHELTER.

Would you find a place for resting
Where the storm cannot annoy?
Look to Jesus, ever trusting;
He will fill your heart with joy.
Turn to Jesus, turn to Jesus,
He alone it is who frees us.
Trust in Jesus, trust in Jesus,
He will fill your heart with joy.

When the world seems bright around you,
And its joys enchanting are,
With His arm he will surround you,
For He dwelleth not afar.
He who loves you still is keeping
Watch, although you may be sleeping.
He His watch is ever keeping,
For He dwelleth not afar.

When the clouds more darkly hover
In the sky above your head,
He with love will gently cover,
And will shield you from all dread.
He is able, He is willing,
As He showed, His own blood spilling;
Proof, indeed, that He is willing.
He will shield you from all dread.

COMMUNION.

Pour the wine, and break the bread,
Christ was numbered with the dead ;
He, who, from a throne on high,
Came to stop the mourner's cry.

Horror shook the very place,
While the sun did veil its face,
For its Maker stooped to die,
And within the grave to lie.

Lo ! they placed him in the grave,
He, who came a race to save.
Death had bound him with a chain,
But his shackles were in vain.

Christ has risen from the dead ;
Let the joyous words be said.
He has risen to the sky,
There to hear the sinner's cry.

Christ is king of heaven and earth ;
Let us praise our Saviour's worth ;
Let us eat His feast to-day ;
Let us follow in His way.

TRUST.

Life was lonely, life was sad ;
Jesus came to make it glad ;
Jesus fills this heart of mine
With a peace and light divine.

Now, I trust His constant care,
Life is lovely, life is fair ;
Every moment is a chance,
Toward my Maker to advance.

Though amid the shadows gray,
Through the valley, be my way,
Brighter yet will be the light
When the mists are out of sight.

I can trust His guiding hand
Even through the desert land,
For I know the one who leads
Will supply my inmost needs.

Once He was the Son of Man ;
Once He walked in labor's van ;
Once the tempter He defied,
And his promptings dashed aside.

Once He trod the rocky path
'Neath the load of sin and wrath.
Once He died upon the tree
Bearing pain and grief for me.

Now He is the risen God,
Whom the spotless angels laud.
Now He is our Advocate,
Saving from the sinner's fate.

Now He sits upon the throne;
Now He loves and keeps His own;
Now He is my Brother, Friend,
Every want He will attend.

THE ONLY WAY

Sinner, Thy Saviour says, "Come unto me."
No other aid than his, can rescue thee.
Turn now away from sin,
And let His light shine in.
He calleth unto thee, "Come unto Me."

Listen unto His call while He is near;
Else you may some time call in deepest fear.
Turn unto Jesus now,
And to Him make thy vow;
Jesus thy cry will hear. Be thou sincere.

Think not He'd turn His ear from thee away.
O no ! in doubt and fear do not delay.

Jesus Himself is love,
All other love above,
Hear Him now gently say, "I am the way."

Trust not upon thyself, else thou wilt fall.
One name alone must be surety for all ;
If thou wouldst heaven see,
In Christ thy faith must be,
He can atone for all, who on him call.

SERVICE.

No man ever lives, but has sometimes a longing
For something beyond what he finds in his life.
The soul that is in him is weary and fainting,
Yet cannot escape from its ne'er ending strife.

Companions may flatter from morning till evening,
And tell him that no one is better than he ;
Yet softly within him there cometh the whisper,
That something more holy and perfect must be.

'Mid pleasures, in vain, he may seek for enjoyment,
From all that the gay world can give for his share ;
To fill that deep longing, he finds there is nothing,
And riches but load him with trouble and care.

In vain he may wander o'er forest and meadow,
Alone in the search of that treasure most rare,
May list to the whisper of brooklet or fountain,
But yet to his sorrow, he finds it not there.

In vain he may kneel while in selfish endeavor,
And call on a Saviour of mercy and love.
In vain he may trust in a fleeting emotion,
And think he is destined for heaven above.

But let him by chance give the cup of cold water
To one who with patience or sorrow hath wrought,
The road that was long comes at once to be shorter;
He findeth in service the treasure he sought.

THE VALLEY.

'Tis good sometimes, to leave our busy care,
And while the sun is sloping toward the west,
Breathe nature's beauty and the balmy air;
Thus mind and body find a needed rest.

For such repose one needs a quiet place,
Removed from busy thoroughfares of life,
Where he can gaze in nature's very face,
And solve the mysteries with which 'tis rife.

To such a place I wish to lead you now,
A churchyard, with its well-kept hedge and trees,
Where marble lips oft tell of marriage vow,
Of birth and death; scant histories are these.

Here with a friend I once stood looking down
Upon the quiet valley far below,
Marking the village and the distant town
And creek by which the yellow willows grow.

Off to the right the narrow valley bends,
And graceful hills shut out the distant view,
And slowly hence, Oriskany descends,
Winding its way, a thread of silver blue.

But to the left the stream bends out of sight,
And in the distance hills slope to the sky.
Nature is decked with autumn's colors bright.
Beauty and peace seem lent to charm the eye.

We looked, and as we looked he slowly said,
"Suppose the thought of every person there
Should take some form in which it could be read,
Would all the landscape be so passing fair?"

I thought, and as I thought I seemed to see
A cloud of mist rise gently from below,
And in it thoughts were acted full and free,
Alike the good and bad, the high and low.

O picture fair ! A mother's love for son.
She holds a basket filled with goodly store,
Gives all her treasures to him one by one,
And fondly wishes they were tenfold more.

A dying Christian calmly looks above;
The waiting angels hover round the bed;
Their music calls in tender strains of love;
Her hands outstretch and friends weep o'er the dead.

Love, rising, takes its true symbolic form.
A dove flies swiftly to its distant mate;
Faithful they live in sunshine or in storm;
In their true breasts no jealousy or hate.

A miser trembles o'er his dusty hoard.
He hears no cry from starving orphan's tongue.
He starts in horror at a creaking board,
Yet cares not for the tears from widows wrung.

The monster, Passion, comes upon the stage,
A gaunt and hungry lion, though o'er-fed.
He lurks for prey, and tears himself in rage;
His ravage fills the modest heart with dread.

His sister, Appetite, goes on before,
And rouses him to follies base and bold;
Nor care they how they gain some hidden store,
Or lure a lamb away from safety's fold.

Hate rises with a dagger in his hand.
Blood stains his garment and the shining blade.
Where is thy brother? Buried in the sand.
A bleeding friend is stretched on yonder glade.

I would, but cannot, picture all these scenes;
Yet fancy will portray them all for you,
With wealth of imagery, beyond my means,
As slowly they pass on before your view.

Imagine, then, the wonder of a child,
The hopes of youth, the castle built in air,
The groans of pain, the peace of patience mild,
The thoughts of suicide, its wild despair.

Imagine, too, the thoughts of working men,
And all their hopes and fears and wants as well;
Then view the thoughts from some low drinking-den,
For here are many of these gates to hell.

See rising, prayers and songs of praise to God,
And hear the story of the cross retold,
Then tell me quickly, ere you cease to laud,
Can you the wonder, of these scenes unfold.

I only hoped to guide your willing thought
In paths of beauty and through pastures green,
And here I leave you, 'mid the fields I sought,
To feast upon the beauties of the scene.

A LITTLE GRAVE.

Here, in a corner, by a rustic seat,
Where gentle breezes, whispering, repeat
The tender sorrow they alone have seen,
A little mound is covered o'er with green.

Here is the place where mourning parents stood,
Bearing the bitter grief as best they could;
Here tears have fallen, and here prayers arose;
Here poetry turned into solemn prose.

This faded wreath is like their withered hope;
And dark the lonely way in which they grope;
Yet one they loved is safe from earthly care,
At rest within our Father's mansion fair.

The sorrows it had known, had it remained,
The sins which might its future life have stained,
Are all unknown within that distant land
Where music rises from the angel band.

Perhaps a mother misses baby's face;
Perhaps she weeps to see the vacant place;
Perhaps she longs to kiss the dimpled chin,
And thinks with tear-stained cheeks, what might have
 been.

Perhaps she thinks again of sparkling eyes
Which viewed the world with innocent surprise;
Perhaps her heart still flutters at the thought
Of one so dear and love so firmly wrought.

Perhaps she trusts the Master with his own,
Nor sadly walks the shady path alone,
But trusts an unseen hand to hold her up,
And take the bitter out of sorrow's cup.

O pretty sunbeam, on a winter's day,
Lighting a moment some one on the way,
Why have you fled? The world is very fair;
Were you too pure to breathe its heavy air?

O deeper are the shadows after light,
Yet time will help us to regain our sight,
And bitter sorrow rankles less within
When it is left unmixed with earthly sin.

O flower that bloomed a season but to die,
Yet thou shalt bloom again beyond the sky,
No more to fade, to wither and decay;
No more from friends shalt thou be torn away.

“ οὐκ ἐθάνομεν ἔτι.”

'88.

WRITTEN FOR CAMPUS DAY, HAMILTON COLLEGE, 1888.

Amid the joy and life and prophecies of spring,
When leaf and bud and bloom foretell the harvest time,
When gentle, soothing breezes sweet enchantment bring,
E'en to the dwellers in this wild and rugged clime,

Our nation stops a day
To bring the flowers of May,
And honor those
Who bravely chose,
To give themselves, that they might save
Fair Freedom from an early grave.

But while the fairest flowers of Freedom's fairest land
We love to bring, and with them crown the grass-grown
mound,

We meet to-day to celebrate a strife less grand,—
Four years of constant conflict on this sacred ground.

And fittingly we meet,
Each other here to greet,
And may each life,
What'er its strife,
Fulfill the prophecies of youth
In noble contest for the truth.

We meet to-day, a merry band,
Here where we met four years ago,
And, strangers, joined hand in hand
In conflict with our common foe.

We meet to live again in thought
The scenes, which, 'neath these arching trees,
Within our memories were wrought;
So let me mention some of these.

The first is mixed, I must confess.
A crowd of "Sophs," a cedar tree,
A rope, and, as you all may guess,
A pail of water thrown at me.

A wrestling match upon the glade,
Where Captain Mitchell tried his hand,
And on his back a bold "Soph" laid,
To the regret of "Sophy's" band.

Our ranks soon thinned, for each one found
A smiling Junior watching near,
To lead away from sight and sound
Which filled the trembling heart with fear.

The next time that we tried our strength,
Was at the ball game, where we found
That Freshmen must give up at length,
Or drive their rivals from the ground.

We lost the game, for as is known,
The Freshmen always lose that game ;
For while they have to stand alone,
The "Soph's" need not do quite the same.

The first few days upon the hill
The sun shone down with sultry heat ;
And, as you may remember still,
We often *bathed* to keep us neat.

Water was plenty for a time,
And each man had his proper share.
No haughty "Soph" with look sublime
Failed to be treated fair and square.

But would you know the finest way
To take a bath when days are hot,
Ask Davis, and perchance he'll say,
"Hey Fresh," then stop, he's not forgot.

The first three weeks our work was hard ;
No time to walk or look about ;
Besides, unless we had a guard,
'Twas not quite safe to be caught out.

It goes for saying, we were brave,
But we were also quite discreet ;
And that we might all trouble save
We kept within a safe retreat.

Although the "Sophs" went out in bands,
And watched for us by night and day;
Not one of us fell in their hands
In any fair or lawful way.

Yet, fair or foul, no matter how,
To make them sport they must have one.
Just think upon their baseness now,
And always such vile actions shun.

A "Fresh" and "Soph," of friends the best,
Together roomed, as oft they do;
And, as perchance you now have guessed,
A plan was formed to dupe the two.

The "Soph" was soon invited out,
And then his trembling chum was seized
And borne away with wildest shout,
To do whatever "Sophies" pleased.

I did not go to see their fun;
It seemed more wise to stay away;
But not to say just what was done,
A table-dance helped make them gay.

But days and months, yes, years passed by,
And we enjoyed them as they passed,
Nor would we now be heard to sigh,
Because they cannot longer last.

We've fought our battle long and well,
We've had our fun, and done our work,
And, though there is not much to tell,
No one of us has been a shirk.

We came here more than fifty strong—
In name at least—yet, sad to say,
But twenty-eight will sing the song
Of '88, Commencement Day.

Four times with sorrow have we heard
The sad news of a comrade's death.
Four times we've passed around the word,
With gentle tone and softened breath.

Yet, from the number that remain,
I briefly mention now a few,
For as we may not meet again,
'Tis well to praise the good and true.

There's *David* from the *Lyons* den,
Sweet singer of our Freshman lay,
“*Whereas*,” he sang so sweetly then,
The Doctor had a word to say.

And then, our *Royal*, leader, “Bill,”
Who through these years has led us well,
The highest place would nobly fill.
No better name we seek to tell.

There's Cole, the *father* of the class;
His little Florence soon will be,
If so 'tis willed, a blooming lass;
From sorrow may her life be free.

* * * * *

But what's the use to tell them o'er?
The highest praise would be too tame,
Yet if you still would ask for *More*,
We have a deacon by that name.

Our 'story's told. Our morn has passed.
The shades of eve must come at last;
Yet, may our motto still be true,
The body dies, not so with you.

Our thoughts, our plans, our deeds must live
While circling years new lives shall give,
And when we no more give our "*yell*,"
Our praises some one else may tell.

But when our name shall be forgot,
Our thoughts and deeds remembered not,
'Twill still be true, though all forget,
That '88 is "not dead yet."







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